Correspondence

between

Maryam Jameelah

and

Maulana Maudoodi

and the Marcuses

Maryam Jameelah

(Formerly, Margaret Marcus)

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http://www.angislam.org/books1/e020.htm

(The above website is no more functional, but there is another website which carries some of the articles of Maryam Jameelah)

MARYAM JAMEELAH

PREFACE

Soon after I began a prolonged and concentrated study (at the age of nineteen) of Islamic literature existed in English transliteration, in order to obtain more intimate knowledge at first-hand, what it personally meant to be a Muslim, and more detailed information about current events in the Muslim countries than what was ordinarily available in newspapers and magazines, I began correspondence with a dozen young people in Arab world and Pakistan. Most of these pen-friends did not last long because I soon grew bitterly disappointed with their westernized mode of living, their indifference and sometimes outright hostility towards Islamic faith and culture and their childish minds.

Finally I decided to develop correspondence with mature and influential Muslim leaders, especially among the ‘*ulema.*

By the close of 1960 I had exchanged letters with

- Dr. Fadhil Jamali, formerly chief delegate of Iraq at the United Nations,

- Dr. Mahmud F. Hoballah, then the Director of the Islamic Center in Washington D.C.,
- the late Shaikh Mohammad Bashir Ibrahimi, chief of the Algerian *ulema,* and the soul of the struggle for freedom against French imperialist domination; Dr. Mohammad el-Babey of al-Azhar,
- Dr. Hamidullah of Paris,
- Dr. Maruf Dawalibi, noted authority on Islamic Law, Professor of the *Shariah* at Damascus University and ex-Prime Minister of Syria ;
- Dr. Said Ramadan, head of the Islamic Center in Geneva,
- and was trying my hardest to make contact with the late Sayyid Qutb Shahid, at that time serving a long prison sentence in Egypt.
- Although the activities of the late Shaikh Hassan al-Banna and *al Ikhwan al Muslimun* had received abundant (though of *course,* derogatory) publicity in the New York press, Maulana Maudoodi and the *Jama'at-e-Islami* had not yet attracted much attention from American scholars or journalists.

Although for nearly a decade, I had been an avid reader of all books and periodicals in English I could find on Islamic subjects, I had never heard of Maulana Maudoodi and knew nothing whatever of the *Jama'at-e-Islami* until I came across Mazharuddin Siddiqui's essay in *Islam the Straight Path* (edited by Kenneth Morgan, Ronald Press, New York, 1958). When by sheer chance I found an excellent article in *The Muslim Digest,* Durban, under the-same name, at once I was eager to correspond with a man with such uncommon merits, and wrote to the editor of the magazine for his address.

I penned my first letter not expecting any more than a single brief reply expressing mutual sympathy for commonly shared ideals. Then I could not possibly foresee that this correspondence would mark the most crucial period in my entire life history.

Maulana Maudoodi had no need to persuade me to adopt Islam as I was already on the threshold of conversion and would have taken the final step even without his

knowledge. Neither did Maulana Maudoodi exert any decisive impact upon the direction of my literary career. Because I had begun to write essays in defense of Islam more than a year before our acquaintance and the main outlines of my ideas were already firmly established long before we knew of each other's existence. Nevertheless, as a result of this correspondence and consequently a vast increase in knowledge and insight, I grew more articulate and my writings gained in depth and maturity.

These letters should be read keeping in view their historical background. In America, John F. Kennedy was President and the country had reached unprecedented heights of political power and economic prosperity.

The so-called "Cold War" between Communist Russia under Khrushchev and the Western democracies had just begun to thaw. In Pakistan, President Ayub Khan ruled unchallenged and in order to make his dictatorship secure, had imposed martial law and banned all political parties, including the *Jama'at-e-Islami.* God-fearing *ulema* were being harassed and intimidated for daring to criticize the high-handed and arbitrary

enforcement of the un-Islamic *Family Laws Ordinance* against the will of the overwhelming majority of the people.

After three and a half years of costly and fruitless psychoanalysis, and two years of hospitalization, I was just emerging from a long, unhappy adolescence filled with loneliness and frustration and was searching to find myself and my proper place in life. It was only due to all-Merciful and Compassionate Allah that at this stage, Maulana Maudoodi gave me the opportunity for a useful life rich in fulfillment by providing the fertile soil from which my endeavors could grow and achieve their fullest expression.

MARYAM JAMEELAH

Jumada al-Thani 14, 1389

August 28, 1969

(1)

New York, December 6, 1960

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Your splendid article entitled "Life After Death" which appeared in the February 1960 issue of *The Muslim Digest* of Durban, South Africa was by far the best and most convincing I have ever read on the subject. When I first read about you in Mazharuddin Siddiqi's contribution to *Islam the Straight Path* (edited by-Kenneth Morgan, Ronald Press, New York, 1958) about Muslims in Pakistan, even though the author was a typical modernist who described you in derogatory terms, I immediately felt myself in complete sympathy with your cause.

During the past year I have discovered that I want to devote my life to the struggle against materialistic philosophic-secularism and nationalism which are still so rampant in the world today and threaten not only the survival of Islam but the whole human race. With this goal in mind, I have already written a number of articles, six of which have been

published in *The Muslim Digest* and The *Islamic Review* of Working, England.

My first article entitled "A Critique of *Islam in Modern History"* written by Professor Wilfred Cantwell Smith, Director of the Islamic Institute at McGill University, Montreal, refutes point by point his arguments that secularism and westernization are compatible with Islam and that Kemal Ataturk's "reforms" in Turkey offer the most desirable model for other Muslim countries to copy.

My second article entitled "Nationalism A Menace to the Solidarity of Islam" shows how incompatible and irreconcilable is modern concept of nationalism to the universal Ummah or brotherhood of Islam.

My third article which appeared in the June 1960 issue of *The Islamic Review* and the August 1960 issue of *The Muslim Digest is* a refutation of Asaf A. Fyzee's (vice-chancellor of Kashmir University) arguments for a westernized Islam, reformed and "liberalized" to the point where it becomes nothing but empty ethical platitudes having

no impact upon the shaping of society and its culture.

Other articles I have written refute

- the Turkish sociologist, Ziya Gokalp who tried to hoodwink his readers into believing that nationalism and secularism are compatible with Islam (Kemal Ataturk derived his inspiration directly from him);
- Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan who took for his god, nineteenth century European science and philosophy,
- Ali Abd ar-Raziq who in his *Islam and the Principles of Government* written just after the abolition of the Ottoman Khalifate, tried to show that the Khalifate was never an integral part of Islam and therefore that religion must be completely and permanently severed from the state.
- President Habib Bourguiba who last year attacked the fast of Ramadan as responsible for hindering Tunisia's economic development and
- Dr. Taha Hussain, blind Egyptian intellectual and author who in his *Future of Culture in Egypt* argues that

Egypt is an integral part of Europe and therefore complete westernization and secularization is a necessity.

All these so-called Muslim "Progressives" are far more dangerous than any external enemies for they are attacking the very foundations of Islam from within. In writing my articles, my [aim] is to open the eyes of my Muslim readers to this fact.

Present-day secularism, nationalism and materialism are derived from the philosophers who provoked the French Revolution such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieux and others like them. Fanatic haters of all religion, they were responsible for the belief that man can progress and achieve salvation without God. The illusion that man is not dependent upon God and that there is no Hereafter, led to the belief that immaterial progress in this life is the supreme goal of the human race. Without this deadly anti-religious atmosphere, such creeds as Marxism, Fascism, Nazism, Pragmatism (as advocated by John Dewey) and Zionism (which caused the Palestine tragedy) could never have taken root. I plan to write another

article about this, offering an explanation in greater detail.*

Perhaps you are wondering who I am. I am a young American woman, twenty-six years of age who has become so intensely interested in Islam as the only hope for the world that I want to become a convert. My big problem is that there are hardly any Muslims in the suburb of New York where I live and I would feel so terribly isolated. That is why when I saw your article in *The Muslim Digest, I* wrote to the editor of the magazine for your address, hoping that you will correspond with me. Please send me, if you can, some samples of your writings, particularly the pamphlet you wrote some years ago entitled *The Process of Islamic Revolution.* Since we share the same ideals and are working toward the same ends in our work, I would like to enjoy contact with you and help you as much as I can in your endeavors.

Yours most respectfully,

(2)

Dear Miss Marcus,

Assalam alaikum

Your letter dated December 5, 1960 reached here when I had left for Saudi Arabia in response to an invitation extended to me by King Ibn Saud. The King wishes to establish an Islamic University in Medina and he had invited me to prepare a scheme for the same. So I had been away from home for about a month. On my return I received your letter and the three cuttings of your essays. I cannot over-emphasize how pleased I was to read your letter and essays.

I have intentionally addressed you in the opening of my letter with the phrase, “Assalaam alaikum” which is the form of greeting peculiar only to Muslims. The reason is that although you are still only thinking about your conversion, I am certain that you are already a Muslim. A person who believes in the unity of God, in Muhammad as His last Prophet and in the Holy Quran as His word and in the life Hereafter is really a genuine Muslim regardless of whether he or she was

born into a Jewish, a Christian or a pagan home. Your ideas bear witness to the fact that you believe in the above-mentioned truths. Therefore I regard you as a Muslim and my sister-in-faith. No baptism or any proselytizing ritual before a priest is needed in order to enter the pace of Islam. If you are convinced of the truth than is Islam, you need only to affirm solemnly that “there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet.” Then you should adopt some Islamic name (i.e. Ayesha or Fatimah) and make a public announcement of your name and religion so that the Muslim world at large should come to know that you are a member of the great fraternity of Islam. Then you should begin to offer the five obligatory prayers daily and follow other Islamic injunctions steadfastly. I find you quite on the threshold of Islam and only one firm step forward will bring you into the fold of the believers. I think this final step will be a natural and logical culmination of your ideas.

My personal assistant has sent you several pamphlets, including the one you mentioned. In addition, I am sending you some more books written by me. When I was reading your articles, I felt as if I am reading my own

ideas. I hope your feeling will be just the same when you read my books. And this, despite the fact that there has been no previous acquaintance between you and me. This mutual sympathy and unanimity in thought has resulted directly from the fact that both of us have derived our inspiration from one and the same source.

These westernized Muslims over whose lack of Islamic spirit you are lamenting, are the worst products of western colonialism in Muslim countries. The greatest blow of colonialism which was administered against us was not in the field of politics or economics but in realm of the mind and spirit. This imperialism has produced many mental slaves among our ranks whose souls even after our political independence remain subjected to the West and who are faithfully following in the steps of their former masters. From this viewpoint, I think our war of liberation has not ended as yet and we have to fight a long-drawn battle against such indigenous foreigners.

And now I cannot help expressing my pleasant surprise at one thing. I want to know precisely how and where a young American

girl could arrive at such a clear and genuine conception of Islam. Could you find some time to write a brief story of your mental evolution and send it to me? I quite understand your feeling of loneliness for lack of an Islamic society. No doubt this is the most acute agony for a Muslim in a non-Muslim country. But it might give you some consolation to know that in the present world, every true Muslim is sharing these pangs of loneliness with you, though it may be to a lesser degree or in a somewhat different way.

If you ever visit Pakistan, it will be my pleasure to meet you and welcome you as my guest. How delightful it would be for me and my family if you could manage to come and keep with us the fast of' Ramadan (falling this year from February 17th to March 18th)! I will be in Lahore until the end of March. Then I intend to tour Africa where I wish to organize Islamic missionary work there, *inshallah. I* will return to Lahore by the end of May. I plan to remain in Lahore for the remainder of the year so whenever you come, you will find me at my home.

Your brother-in-Islam,
ABUL ALA

(3)

New York, January 31, 1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Several days ago I received your gift of English books and Pamphlets which amounted to a small library. I cannot begin to thank you enough, only to tell you that I will keep them and treasure them always. Just yesterday I received your letter in which you told me that when you read my articles, it was as if you were reading your own ideas. I assure you that when I read your books and pamphlets, I felt as if I were reading my very own thoughts only expressed more forcefully and comprehensively than I perhaps ever could write. My two latest articles have been one about the poetry of Allama Iqbal*, the only man in the entire contemporary world of Islam who has been able to express in poetry of enduring artistic value what it truly means to be a Muslim and the other entitled, "The Philosophical Sources of Western Materialism" in which I trace the development of Western materialism from its inception in ancient Greece, through the "Renaissance"

to its culmination in the form of ideologies like Communism. In the latter I try to show that the evils we are witnessing today are the logical result of a trend lasting more than five hundred years. All the major leaders of Western thought were ardent materialists; in fact, the whole theme of modern Western civilization was its revolt against the Church and ultimately all religious and spiritual values. Thus, materialism is part of the very essence of the West. The leaders of Asia and Africa, as you so aptly pointed out in your pamphlet, *Nationalism and India,* have been simultaneously taught to despise their native heritage and imbued with the philosophies of materialism. Filled with hatred and resentment against their former Western masters, they are merely flinging the garbage right back into their faces! I mean this as a description of violent upheavals taking place in Asia and Africa now, particularly in the Congo. After what I have read of the violence going on in Africa, I fear for your safety. It is extremely painful for me to read how such Muslim countries as the United Arab Republic slavishly copy Communist Russia and China in their foreign policies in Africa. I would like to be sympathetic with such countries as the United Arab Republic but

can discern nothing which could be called Islamic in the policies of its government. A gullible Muslim might like to rejoice in the efforts Nasser is making to promote the cause of Islam in Africa. But it is clear beyond doubt that he is not so much interested in furthering the case of the Faith than merely using it as a slogan instrumental in the extension of his own personal glorification and prestige. It is my deep and sincere conviction that your understanding of Islam as you present it in your books, *Towards Understanding Islam* and *Islamic Law and Constitution as* well as all the pamphlets (you were so kind to send me) is the only correct interpretation and I hope I will not be considered narrow-minded to say so. I respect you and what you do because you adhere to Islam in its pristine purity and refuse to compromise to propitiate the whims of the "times" or adulterate it with alien philosophies. As you present Islam in your writings, I believe this is the superior way of life and the only road to Truth. Tragically, there are many Muslims who disagree. Many the time I have met young Muslim students studying in New York colleges and universities who try to assure me that Kemal Ataturk was a good Muslim. And that Islam

must submit to the criteria of contemporary philosophies and any Islamic principle or practice that conflicts with modern Western culture must be discarded. Such thinking is praised as "liberal”, "forward-looking," and "progressive" while those who think as we do are branded as "reactionaries" and "fanatics" who refuse to face the realities of the day.

One point in your booklet, *Nationalism and India* which deserves special mention was your opposition to Muslims wearing Western clothing. Many would dismiss this as a trivial matter but I consider it of the utmost importance. Did not the Holy Prophet himself say that "whoever imitates the unbelievers is one of them"? I think that the Muslim should feel proud to express the fact in his distinctive physical appearance. That is why whenever I see a Muslim leader dressed completely in Western clothing and clean-shaven, I cannot help but consider his faith defective because in his dress, he is advertising to the world that he is ashamed of his true identity. Have you ever read *Islam at the Crossroads* by Muhammad Asad which takes up this subject at length?

It is not surprising why you should be astonished how a girl born into a typical American home could adopt Islam so now I will tell you how it happened.

When I was ten years old, attending reformed Jewish Sunday school, I soon became enthralled with the tragic history of the Jews. I was particularly fascinated with the story of Abraham and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac; of Isaac who was supposed to be the father of the Jews and Ishmael, the father of the Arabs. Not only were the Jews and Arabs originally kindred peoples but their history is intertwined at many periods. I learned that under Muslim rule, particularly in Spain, the Jews experienced their Golden Age of Hebrew culture. Being ignorant, of course, of the sinister nature of Zionism, I naively thought that the Jews of Europe were returning to Palestine in order to become true Semites again and live like Arabs! I was very excited by the prospects that the Jews and Arabs would cooperate and together create a new Golden Age such as occurred in Spain.

Throughout my adolescence, I suffered from what amounted to social ostracism in school because I liked to spend so much of my time

reading books in the library and had no interest in the opposite sex, parties, dancing, cinema, clothes, jewels or cosmetics. I thought that smoking cigarettes was a vulgar habit and a waste of money. Despite the fact that one must drink at parties to be socially acceptable and my parents consider moderate indulgence in wine inseparable from the "good things of life", I have never touched liquor. Since I shared few interests in common with the girls and boys my age, I had almost no friends throughout the eight years of junior and senior high school.

During my second year at New York University, I met a young girl also from a Jewish home who had decided to embrace Islam. As passionately interested in the Arabs as I was, she introduced me to many of her Arab and Muslim friends in New York. She and I attended the same class taught by a Jewish rabbi which was entitled "Judaism in Islam." The rabbi tried to prove to his students under the guise of "comparative religion" that everything good in Islam was borrowed directly from the Old Testament, the *Talmud* and the *Midrash.* Our textbook *(Judaism In Islam,* Abraham I. Katsh, Washington Square Press, New York, 1954)

written by this same rabbi set down the second and third *Surahs* of the Quran verse by verse, tracing their origins from alleged Jewish sources. Interspersed with this was a liberal sprinkling of Zionist propaganda in many films and colored slides glorifying the Jewish state. Ironically enough, instead of convincing me of the superiority of Judaism over Islam, this course converted me to the opposite view. Despite the fact that in the Old Testament, there are some universal concepts of God and high moral ideals as preached by the Prophets, Judaism has always retained its tribal, nationalistic character. Despite some noble idealism, the Jewish scriptures is like a Jewish history book and their God a tribal god. The narrow-minded parochialism has found its modern expression (although in a thoroughly secular form) in Zionism. The Premier of Israel, David Ben-Gurion believes in no personal, supernatural God, never attends synagogue, and observes no Jewish laws, customs or rituals, and yet he is considered, even by the most pious and orthodox of Jews, to be one of the greatest Jews of our times. Most Jewish leaders consider God as some super real-estate agent who parcels out land for their exclusive benefit! Zionism has made the

worst aspects of modern Western materialistic nationalism its very own. Only such a philosophy of expediency and opportunism could justify in their minds such a ruthless campaign to exile the majority of Arabs and trample on the pitiful minority who remained in "Israel" and then style themselves as the bearers of "progress" and "enlightenment" to a "benighted" Arab world! Although "Israel's" scientific and technological development is superior, this material advancement combined with the most reactionary tribal, "chosen people" morality, I believe is a major threat to the peace of the world. I once heard Golda Meir address the United Nations General Assembly; "I oppose anybody who disputes Israel's right to security by retaining all Arab territories occupied by conquest. The only ethics that concerns us is the survival of Jewish people in the Jewish State !"

(Never mind, Mrs. Golda Meir, about the survival, much less the well-being of any other people!) Then too, I soon discovered that Jewish scholars nursed even more enmity towards the Prophet Muhammad than the Christians. The hypocrisy of reformed Judaism was equally unacceptable. Thus

although of Jewish origin, I cannot identify my ideals and aspirations with the Jewish people.

As neither of my parents are observant Jews and are the most firmly convinced of the necessity for American Jews to think, live, look and behave exactly like other Americans.

After two years of the Jewish religious school, I was enrolled in the educational system of the Ethical Culture Movement founded by the late Dr. Felix Adler in the closing decades of the 19th century. In your booklet, *The Ethical View-point of Islam,* you referred to this agnostic humanist movement which rejects the supernatural foundation of moral values, regarding them as purely related man-made. I attended weekly instruction at the Ethical Culture school for four years until I graduated at the age of fifteen. From that time until I entered Rabbi Katsh's class at New York University in October 1954, I was a thorough-going atheist and contemptuously dismissed all organized Orthodox religions as superstition.

One day in class, Rabbi Katsh gave the students a lecture where he argued why all the ethical values cherished as the universal inherent right of every man are absolute and God-given and not man-made and relative as I had previously been taught to think. I forget the specific arguments but only remember that they were so logical and convincing to me that this marked the turning point of my life.

As I studied the Quran more and more deeply, I began to realize why Islam and Islam alone had made the Arabs a great people. Without the Qur'an, the Arabic language would probably be extinct now. At best. minus Quran, Arabic would be as obscure and insignificant as Zulu! All other Arabic literature and culture owes its existence to the Quran. Therefore Arabic culture and Islam are inseparable. Without the latter the former would have no international importance.

Although my parents can't understand my antagonism against the culture in which they raised me and especially my hostile feelings about Zionism, they give me the freedom to lead my own life. At first they tried to discourage my involvement in Islam, fearing that this would alienate me from them and the rest of the family.

But now that they see how determined I am, they assure me they will not try to stop me from conversion or put any obstacles in the way of leading the life that makes me happy. Even though they hold contrary views to mine on almost everything, they are tolerant and broadminded enough no matter how much they may disapprove, never to threaten to disinherit me or cut their ties. What a contrast to Orthodox Jewish parents who consider a child who embraces another religion as dead!

Yesterday I went to the Islamic Foundation in New York, where the Imam, Dr. Nuruddin Shoreibah, who is a graduate of Al-Azhar, is now teaching me how to recite the five daily prayers in Arabic in preparation for the fast of Ramadan which I intend to undertake for the first time.

Whether it is best that we work together or independently is for you to decide as we both stand for the same ideals.

On the basis of what I have written you in this lengthy letter, I would be most grateful for any suggestions you have to offer.

Respectfully yours,

MARGARET MARCUS

Lahore, February 25, 1961

Dear Miss Marcus,

Assalaam alaikum warahmatullah

Your detailed letter dated January 31st arrived here a bit late. I am sorry that I failed to send a prompt reply due to some unavoidable preoccupations. I am afraid all this delay has put you to inconveniences for which I must offer my apologies.

I studied your life-sketch with great care and interest. As I read it, I came to realize how an open and unbiased mind can find access to the Right Path provided it makes a sincere and steady effort. The story of your sufferings, tribulations and mental anguish contained nothing unexpected for me. If a person is passing through a constant implacable conflict with his social surroundings and is at a loss to find even a single trace of sympathy or appreciation in his mental or moral environment, it would be unusual indeed if his or her nerves do not undergo a final collapse. Your maladjustment is a natural consequence of the

incompatibility between you and your society. Your temperament and taste, your ideas, your habits and conduct all are fundamentally different from those peculiar to the society you live in. The constant friction could have done you much more harm than what it really did. You seem to be just like an Equatorial sapling implanted into the Arctic Zone and you had to face the inevitable. Every person can best grow and shine in a favorable atmosphere. In a hostile climate one is apt to lose or dubbed to have lost one's mental balance and all one's capabilities are likely to wither away. Similar are the reasons for your being still unmarried. Your society can not like the type of woman that you are. All your merits are considered as defects there. You cannot possibly find a true life-companion in your present set-up, and if you are artificially tied to a person there, it could hardly prove to be desirable or successful matrimonial arrangement.

Ever since your first letter, I have been pondering over your problems. I think that you must choose between two alternatives. Either you should start to work openly for Islam in America and gather a group of sympathizers and co-workers around you or

you should migrate to a Muslim country, preferably Pakistan. Now for me, it is not easy to decide which alternative would be best suited for you. It depends upon your circumstances and aptitudes which you know better. But this much I can say that if you come to live in Pakistan, you will find yourself amidst many like-minded people barring the language difference. God-willing, you will receive here all moral as well as material support and encouragement. Moreover, there is every likelihood here that you may find a virtuous young Muslim to be your life-companion. When you are in Pakistan, I can offer every possible help to you but I am-sorry to say that I am unable to assist you in your passage from America to Pakistan because of the very stringent restrictions on foreign exchange here.

I do hope that your parents as your well-wishers will not stand in the way of your choice. They should not fail to keep in view the fact that if their daughter is forced to live in inclement weather, not only will she be doomed to lead a life of despair but there is every danger of nervous breakdown. On the other hand, if she is fortunate enough to find a friendly and suitable social atmosphere, her

mind will be restored to full health and vigor and she will be able to lead a useful and productive life. I think once they are able to grasp this point fully, no resistance will be encountered on their part. Rather, it is not improbable that they will welcome my suggestions.

You have asked me about the book, *Islam at the Crossroads. I* have read that book along with other writings by Muhammad Asad and I had the opportunity of personal acquaintance with him when after accepting Islam, he settled in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. Perhaps you may be interested to know that he is also of (Austrian) Jewish origin. I have great respect for his exposition of Islamic ideas and especially his criticism of Western culture and its materialistic philosophies. I am sorry to say, however, that although in the early days of his conversion, he was a staunch, practicing Muslim, gradually he drifted close to the ways of the so-called "progressive" Muslims, just like the "reformed" Jews. Recently his divorce from his Arab wife and marriage to a modern American girl hastened this process of deviation more definitely. Although these melancholy facts cannot be disputed, much

less justified, yet I cannot blame him too much for this. At the time we met during the first years after his conversion, very welcome and pleasant changes were brought about in his life. But once man begins to live the life of a true Muslim, all his capabilities lose their "market value." It is the same sad story with Muhammad Asad, who had always been accustomed to a high and modern standard of living and after embracing Islam, had to face the severest financial difficulties. As a result, he was forced to make one compromise after another. Still I hope that despite these adverse changes, his ideals and convictions have not altered even though his practical life has suffered many modifications. Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (God's blessings be upon him) once said that a time would come when to follow his ways would be like holding a live coal in one's hands. This prophecy has been fulfilled. Now-a-days if a man or woman tries to practice the teachings of Islam, stiff resistance is encountered by materialistic civilization at each and every step. The whole environment turns hostile to such a Muslim. Either he must be forced to compromise or he will constantly be at loggerheads with society. The strongest and most steady

nerves are indispensable for such a resolute and unremitting struggle.

Have you contacted the Islamic Centers in Washington D.C. or Montreal, which may be useful for you? The address of the Islamic Center of Montreal is as follows:

The Islamic Center,
1345 Red Path Crescent,
Montreal-2, and Quebec, CANADA).

Thank you for expressing your sincere anxiety for my safety as regards my forthcoming African tour. Fortunately the parts of this continent to which I am presently planning my journey are quite safe and peaceful. I intend to go to Somaliland, Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Mauritius and the Republic of South Africa, all of which contain large communities of Indo-Pakistan and Arab Muslims and with their help, I hope to further the propagation of Islam in Africa.

I quite understand your bewildering thoughts about President Nasser. Far from being a defender of Islam, his cruel hands are drenched deep in innocent martyrs' blood. By ruthlessly crushing *al Ikhwan al*

Muslimun, he has administered an irreparable blow to the Islamic forces in the Arabic-speaking world. He has at least four tongues in his mouth.

- When he speaks to the Egyptians, he says, "We are the sons of Pharaoh" (and he sets up in the public squares of Cairo gigantic statues of Remises II - that cursed Pharaoh of oppression).
- When he speaks to the Arab world, he says, "We are part and parcel of a single glorious Arab nation."
- When he addresses the Africans at large, he tries to become their self-styled exponent and mouthpiece.
- Recently he has started to trumpet the "Voice of Islam" over Radio Cairo because it suits his convenience and strategy.

Unscrupulous adventurers like him can never serve the cause of Islam. Only selfless, sincere, modest and uncompromising *Mujahids,* who are ready to sacrifice every personal gain and ambition and lay down their lives at the altar of Islam, can do this.

I am extremely happy to know that you have become an observant Muslim and have begun to offer daily prayers and keep fast in Ramadan. I congratulate you for this and pray to Allah that He may keep you always steadfast and progressing on the path of Islam.

Sincerely yours,

ABUL ALA

New York, March 8,1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

I received your last letter of February 25th which made me so happy to read your detailed and thoughtful reply to all the things which have for so long weighed heavily upon my mind.

Enclosed is a photo-essay from “Look Magazine” about the latest fashions in women's dress, which to me are so repulsive that I refuse to conform and would rather be struck dead than seen wearing it. American and European fashion designers appear to do all they can to make the modern Western woman look like a street-walker. Even professional prostitutes do not go to the extremes of these so-called "respectable" women. Oscar Wilde stated the truth when he once said that fashion is something so ugly, it has to be changed every six months! One of the functions of clothes, of course, is modesty and, as you can see from the pictures in the article, modern Western fashions for women are designed exclusively for commercialized sex. One of the very first things I did after accepting Islam and saying

my prayers, was to lengthen all my skirts. My relatives were most surprised to see me wearing skirts almost to the ankles when all the women are wearing their dresses above the knee. There is loud propaganda in American popular magazines about the increasing "emancipation" of women in Muslim lands due to the impact, of course, of Western education and the mass-media. Although I believe that every woman should be educated for the fullest use of her intellectual capacities, I certainly question the advantages of taking women out of the home (particularly those with young children) to compete in business offices and factories with men and substituting nurseries and kindergartens for a home upbringing. This is exactly what has happened in Soviet Russia and Communist China where the so-called "emancipation" of women is being deliberately used by the rulers to destroy the family. To a lesser degree, a similar situation exists in my country.

What you said about Muhammad Asad in your last letter shocked and saddened me deeply. I never suspected even from his most recent writings and letters to me that he was not a staunchly observant Muslim. I can

never forget that splendid chapter in his book, *Islam at the Crossroads,* about the necessity for Muslims to strictly follow the *Sunnah* as well as the Quran if Islam is to survive and flourish. His arguments for the authenticity of Hadith were so sound and convincing, and his deep feeling for Islam so evident, despite what you told me about his financial difficulties, I couldn't help but wonder why he changed his mind. I pray to Allah that such a thing will never happen to me.

Could you please describe in some detail the program you outlined for the new Islamic University of King lbn Saud? At first I thought that the university would be modeled on the pattern of al-Azhar. But just a few days ago I read an article which said that the proposed university would be essentially secular, patterned on Western lines with Islamic studies only a small and incidental part of the curriculum. The same article described King lbn Saud's plans to rebuild the entire cities, of Mecca and Medina. Although I know that so many of the ancient buildings in the holy cities are antiquated and in desperate need of repair, I only hope that the new buildings will be constructed in conformity to the

Islamic style of architecture because the whole atmosphere in these places would be ruined if they are copied from the ultra-modern fashions. Personally I abhor modern architecture because it conflicts with every criteria of beauty, symmetry, grace and warmth. Every time I visit the United Nations headquarters (which is an outstanding example of modern architecture) I am repelled by the bleakness, barrenness and coldness of the high-rise buildings which look like nothing more than giant boxes with glass windows. I think that the contemporary architecture which is giving our cities an uglier face every day, is a prefect reflection of the rejection of all spiritual values by those who design them. Far better for Mecca and Medina to remain old and even dilapidated than go the way of our modern cities.

Although I knew nothing about the Islamic Center in Montreal until you told me about it in your last letter, ever since its completion in 1957, I have kept in constant contact with the mosque in Washington. Last summer I made a special trip to Washington just to see it and talk with the Director, Dr. Mahmoud F. Hoballah who, like Dr. Shoreibah, is a graduate of al-Azhar. The Washington

mosque was built in conformity to traditional Muslim architecture and is as beautiful as any elsewhere in the world. The only thing, which saddened me, is that the Washington authorities do not permit the *Adhan* to be called from the minaret lest that annoy the non-Muslim residents in the area as a "public nuisance!" And the mosque is only for the Juma'a prayers. Attendance as far as I could observe for the five daily prayers is almost nil.

Do you know about the campaign against the fast of Ramadan being carried on by the President of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba? He claims that the fast is injurious to health and is responsible for Tunisia's economic backwardness because industrial production slows down during that period. Those who insist on observing the fast are maligned as "reactionaries." The chief target of President Bourguiba's venom is 'the Rector of Zaituna University which has for centuries a major center of Islamic education in North Africa.

I have read in the newspapers that in the Soviet Union each year as Ramadan approaches, the Communists intensify their propaganda against Islam. Communist propaganda for domestic consumption never

fails to stress the economic destructiveness of Ramadan, arguing that a factory or farm worker exhausted from fasting or a Muslim who stops work to say his prayers is sabotaging national productivity. Even though Habib Bourguiba is supposed to be such a great friend of the Western democracies, he uses exactly the same tactics against Ramadan as the Communists.

Do you know the Orientalist, Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith who is Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montreal? If so, did you ever read his book, *Islam in Modern History,* the theme of which is Islam as the Holy Prophet preached and practiced, is "out-of-date" and must accept secularization and modernization if it is to survive in the future? In the chapter about Pakistan, here is what he has to say about you:

“..... Maudoodi would present Islam as a system, one that long ago provided mankind with set answers to all its problems rather than as a faith in which God provides mankind anew each morning the riches whereby it may answer them for itself... Modern tendencies would view Maudoodi's system as dated, as inadequate in scope and too

rigid in form to represent faithfully those imperatives for today and would seek the truth of Islam more in the realm of values, dynamics and spirit... Furthermore, to judge from his own expositions, it would appear that he aims at imposing his system on Pakistan, if he can contrive to get his group into a position of power, also in a rigorously systematic fashion Maudoodi evinces but scant concern both for the human beings and their individual welfare who would live under his rule. His ideology seems to make little Allowance either for the wishes and even the integrity of the ruled or for the propensity which men in positions of authority have all too often demonstrated through human history to distort even the finest of schemes by individual aberration... Maudoodi's movement is a compromise and an adaptation between previous Islamic history and the demands of modern life from which he abstracts for his static pattern, rather than a creative vision...."

Since I know that when this letter reaches you, you will be too busy with your preparations for your tip to Africa to answer, I will not be expecting your reply until after you return to Lahore at the end of May.

Sincerely yours,

MARGARET MARCUS

Lahore, April 1, 1961

Dear Miss Marcus,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Your letter dated March 8th had arrived here promptly but I could not reply earlier due to my indifferent health. Since the middle of Ramadan, I have been suffering from a severe and constant pain in my right shoulder and no treatment as yet has given me relief. Doctors have finally advised me to have a deep X-ray treatment.

I have read your letter with much interest. The pictures of American feminine dress sent by you are no news for me. We usually see European and American women here in Lahore in a similar fashion. I have seen Arab women in Cairo, Beirut and Damascus moving about in this very same kind of dress. I simply cannot imagine how a woman with any sense of decency could thus attire herself even in her own home before her nearest relatives, not to speak of going out like that. I am very much pleased to know how much you despise this form of dress. If

you manage to learn Arabic or Urdu and study direct the detailed instructions which the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) has given pertaining to women, I hope you will find them exactly corresponding and appropriate to the real womanly nature, The social role which the Western woman is being made to play, is not in reality "emancipation" but perversion and enslavement and as a result of false and misleading propaganda, women are trying to "dewomanize" themselves. They think it is degrading to fill their natural place in life and to perform the tasks assigned to them by nature. Instead they seek honor in manly pursuits. Western civilization has proved to be very cruel to its womanhood. On one hand, it wants woman to bear the burden of nature single-handed and on the other hand, this civilization calls her out to perform the multifarious duties of a man. Thus she has been squarely placed between two grindstones. Moreover this same propaganda has enticed women in such a way that they feet they must make themselves more and more attractive to the opposite sex and thus outrage their decency by wearing scanty dress or even nudity. They have been turned into play-things in male hands. Islam has

proved to be a real benefactor to women because it has associated each woman to a single man and has absolved her from all other men. Islam sets a high value on those pursuits, which are assigned, to her by nature. Western civilization on the other hand has made her the slave of numerous men and has attached a false notion of disgrace to all tasks truly befitting a woman.

Your information about the Islamic University of Medina is not correct. The curriculum, submitted by me and approved by a committee appointed by the King, provides for the teaching of Quran, Hadith, Fiqh, Kalam, and Islamic history combined with European philosophy, jurisprudence, history, economics, politics and comparative religions. One European language - either French, English or German-will be compulsory. The education visualized in this scheme can neither be labeled "secular" or "religious" in the narrowly accepted sense of these terms. We intend that this University will be different from modern colleges or old-fashioned madrassahs and shall occupy a unique place all its own. We wish to produce such Muslim scholars well versed in Islamic teachings combined with modern knowledge

so they will be competent to apply Islamic principles to the problems of contemporary life.

Like all other Muslim lands, Saudi Arabia is now the scene of a head-on clash between two conflicting civilizations. The discovery of oil has brought limitless and undreamed wealth and the flood-gates to Western civilization have thus been thrown open. Modern Riyadh is rising like a true replica of Western capitals in the Arabian Desert. Similar is the case of Dhahran and Jeddah. Even Mecca and Medina are also in the process of being "modernized". In such a critical state, if we fail to produce first-rate scholars who can equip Arabia with the requisite intellectual and practical leadership, this sanctuary of Islam, I am afraid, will be swept away by the same surge of materialistic culture which has already wrought havoc in Turkey and now Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia and Pakistan are experiencing its deadly grip. I think it is our foremost duty to rescue the center of Islam from this rising peril.

President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia is faithfully following in the footsteps of Mustafa Kemal

Ataturk of Turkey. All these so-called modern leaders of Muslims have played the most treacherous game in their respective countries. When they launch a struggle for political freedom from Western imperialism, they appeal to Muslims in the name of Islam but as soon as these leaders manage to capture power, they make religion their scapegoat for national "backwardness" and mercilessly stamp out every manifestation of Islamic thought and culture. All such persons are the products of imperialism. They have no knowledge or appreciation of Islam. They have been educated and brought up in England, France or other European countries. Many of them have European wives (Bourguiba also has a French wife). In their daily life and behavior, they are exact prototypes of Western people. Muslims had to accept their leadership in order to win their political liberty and now these Europeanized leaders are trying to remove the last vestige of Islamic civilization from their realms in order to make their political power strong and secure.

Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith and I met face to face in 1958 when he presented to me a complimentary copy of the book you mentioned in your last letter. These people are unsuccessfully trying to manufacture a new Islam for us and are vainly hoping that we will abandon

the true Islam of the Qur’an and Sunnah and accept the version fashioned and tailored by themselves, unaware of the fact that all their efforts are doomed to failure. A Muslim must remain a Muslim in the genuine sense or that word and God forbid, if he breaks away from the pure and pristine Islam, he will choose a mid-way course between the two and the chances of survival for a lukewarm Islam are very dim indeed.

I am wonder-struck at the folly of the Western powers. On the one band, they want the Muslims to fight against communism because it is a godless creed while on the other band, they regard true Islam as a menace and so try to de-Islamize Muslims and encourage every kind of heresy and apostasy. What a pity! these people do not understand what the inevitable results of their blunder must be. They always encourage those elements that are infusing un-Islamic values into the Muslim countries, and never tire of condemning those persons who are struggling to revive the true spirit of Islam, they malign as "reactionaries" and "fanatics". Not content even with such diatribes, they make the modernist leaders instrumental in persecuting those Muslims who are working for an Islamic awakening. God only knows what will ultimately happen due to

such unwise and misguided attitudes on the part of our Western critics.
Dr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith and his counterparts among ourselves should rest assured that there is not even the remotest possibility that the majority of Muslims will accept this new version of "Islam" as genuine and would believe in it. Thank God, the original sources of Islam, the Quran and Sunnah, are still to be found intact and unalloyed. So long as even a single Muslim is left in the world having direct access to these basic sources, no counterfeit and unauthorized editions of Islam can ever gain currency among Muslims.
My journey to Africa will probably be postponed to July because my failing health does not permit me to travel. Furthermore, my African friends think that my tour would be more profitable if I go there when the election excitement has calmed down in Kenya and political tranquility prevails there once more.

With salaams and best wishes,

Sincerely,

ABUL ALA

New York, April 12,1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

I was shocked to learn that you could not make the trip to Africa because of bad health and that you have been ill for almost two months. I only hope that the doctors will find an effective treatment to relieve the pain. Suffering such pain, it must have required much effort on your part to type such a detailed letter to me and replying to all the questions I asked you to my satisfaction.

These days it seems that one is constantly bombarded by radio, television and the press about the necessity for "raising the standard of' living" and "economic development" in the so-called "under- developed" countries. In order to do this, foreign aid on a massive scale from the United States or the Soviet Union is deemed essential. The so-called "economic development" of the so-called "under- -developed" countries has become an obsession. Economic development of "underdeveloped" countries is interpreted to mean urbanization, industrialization and mechanized agriculture. Practically speaking,

the slogan of "economic development" is simply an instrument for spreading Westernization and the wholesale destruction of the indigenous cultures of Asia and Africa. The need for eliminating illiteracy and spreading education is always emphasized but always now-a-days in this context, education means modern secular education along purely Western lines stressing technology. Islamic means for attaining social justice and a more equitable distribution of wealth such as *Zakat,* the inheritance laws, the *Waqf* foundations and the prohibition of interest on capital are entirely ignored. The Only movement in recent times I know of which has attempted to achieve social justice according to Islamic methods is the banned *Ikhwan al Muslimun* founded in 1928 by Shaikh Hassan al Banna.

During my adolescence I used to be very much excited by the ideals of such United Nations organs as UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) because I have always been internationally-minced and interested in furthering cultural exchange and better understanding between the different peoples of the world. But lately, I have begun to take

a dim view even of UNESCO. I have read all its publications ever since its inception when I was a child of twelve back in 1946 and although they are supposed to be completely objective and impartial, they are just as prejudiced against the Islamic way of life as any other Western periodicals. In fact, I have come to look upon the United Nations agencies as only one more means for spreading Westernize and modern materialism. The first Director of UNESCO was none else than Sir Julian Huxley, the grandson of the celebrated English biologist, Sir Thomas Huxley, and is the author of a number of books notorious for their atheism and materialism.

The last chapter of my novel, *Ahmad Khalil: The Biography of a Palestinian Arab Refugee* was published as a short story both in the March 1961 issue of *The Islamic Review* in Working and *The Ramadan Annual of the Muslim Digest* from Durban. Since then I have received a number of letters from Muslims objecting to my sympathetic portrayal of the "traditionalist", "medieval" Arab life like wearing native dress, eating with fingers from a common dish, sleeping on a rug or mat on the floor, etc. They insist I

have done great harm to the Arab cause by portraying my characters living in such "backwardness." What you do think?

I think that the modern-educated ruling elite in Asia and Africa are so obsessed with the mania to "develop" their respective countries not because they really care about the personal welfare of the poor but rather because they are *ashamed* of them! They shudder with the most acute inferiority complex every time their countries are labeled as "backward." I think the mania for industrialization stems not from any real positive benefit the country would gain but because big factories and huge dams and hydroelectric plants would increase their prestige and respect on the part of the "advanced" countries. Nations are no different from individuals who strain every nerve to accumulate as much wealth as they can just so they can show if off and boast about it. The Holy Quran sums up this attitude beautifully when it says: "Know that the life of this world is only play and idle amusement, pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying in rivalry among yourselves riches and children." This Quranic verse is even truer today than it was in the Prophet's time.

Now I can understand why belief in the Hereafter is such an essential part of Islam and why it is emphasized in almost every verse of the Quran. As soon as one begins to have faith in the Hereafter, the values of this world considers supreme immediately lose their importance. Belief in the Hereafter at once gives the believer a true perspective on life so that he can distinguish between what is really important and what is not. He or she then begins to long for the good, which lasts eternally and not for mere material objects doomed to perish soon without a trace behind. Belief in God's judgment in the Hereafter is the only effective sanction behind the moral law. Minus Hereafter, religion is meaningless. If the Hereafter is such a moral necessity, it cannot be the product of mere wishful thinking, as the skeptics tell us, but must be an objective reality!

I have also told you bow terribly isolated I feel from others who share our thinking. Here in New York, there is a small community of Muslims whom I meet at the mosque every week when I go there for Arabic lessons. On Fridays, I go to Columbia University to meet with a group of Muslim students from various

countries (including Pakistan) where we gather for *Jumaa* prayers and then a meal with discussion but as much as my parents, their views clash with mine on almost everything. They firmly believe that Islam must be reconciled with modern Western civilization and its ideals and practices modified accordingly. Some even criticizes fundamental Islamic doctrines. Many doubt the authenticity of *Hadith.* Although I make every effort to be polite and tactful, I cannot convince them and they cannot convince me. I always leave with a feeling of frustration. My Arabic teacher at the mosque, who is a native of Cairo, told me that he regards the fact of his being an Egyptian as important as his being a Muslim. He assured me that, far from being an artificial import from the West, nationalism is inborn in the hearts of all men everywhere.

Now I want to ask you what can be done about this? Thus far since November 1959, I have written a number of articles defending this viewpoint and had them published in various English- language Muslim magazines, but this is not enough. Besides writing, I would be very grateful if you could

tell me what practical work along these lines you have done and are doing now.

With every prayer for the improvement of your health, I send my *salaams* to you and your family.

Sincerely,

MARGARET MARCUS

Lahore, May 19, 1961

Dear Miss Marcus,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah

I received your letter of April 12th and again I must apologize for delaying my reply, the reason being, as you already know, my failing health and over-work. After a prolonged illness, I was finally given deep X-ray treatment and thank God I have almost recovered. Only weakness remains.

I read with interest the cutting from *The Islamic Review* of the short story from your novel that you enclosed with your letter. You have painted the most accurate picture of the impact of Western materialism upon the Arab Muslims. I have seen with my own eyes similar influences on Arabian life during my last visit there and I discussed these matters with Islam-loving thinkers and reformers. The comments you have received on your story do not surprise me in the least. Even sincere Muslims fear that Westerners and modern Muslims will react with repugnance when such a "retrograde" picture of Islam is presented to them. Your first reaction to such

adverse opinions will naturally be mingled with dismay but you should try to understand all of this. If you persevere patiently in propagating the truth of Islam, you are sure to succeed in your efforts eventually and win converts on your way. I advise you not to try to convince everybody, especially those who do not care to listen or whose views are diametrically opposed to yours, even though they may be your own dear parents. Allah tells us: "Admonish if admonition is profitable." You should always try to seek out such souls as are able to rise above purely materialistic conceptions and appreciate higher spiritual and moral values. Unless you first succeed in reaching such persons, you will feel alone and isolated in the wilderness of materialism and constant quarrels or arguments with hostile or apathetic people will tend to create pessimism in your mind.

Of course, it is natural that the so-called "under-developed" countries should want to put an end to their backwardness as quickly as possible and catch up with the Western countries in the race for material progress. But the tragedy is that aid from rich countries is bringing a deluge of Western culture in its wake which is a deadly menace to our

religion, our morality, our civilization and culture-in short, everything near and dear to us which makes our lives worth living. Furthermore, the leadership in Muslim countries is in the hands of those persons whose minds are completely vanquished and who venture to re-interpret the laws of the *Shariah* despite their meager knowledge. Such a situation is doubly dangerous. It not only poses a threat to Islamic patterns of thought and behavior but also there is every possibility of Muslim countries falling into the lap of Communism. When the Muslim peoples witness their sacred and sublime values of life being trampled under-foot and when nothing but grossly materialist ideas are left for which they could life and die, then surely the Muslim world will be fertile soil for Communist propaganda, infiltration and conspiracies. I think that American foreign policy will suffer irreparable reverses in Muslim countries. It may meet the same fate here, it has encountered in China and all its donations in cash and kind may fall into the hands of the enemy. The deep-rooted prejudice against Islam and their hatred 'for Muslims among Americans and Europeans have blinded them even to their own loss!

The question you asked me at the end of your last letter is an important question indeed! This is indeed precisely the question, which I have been trying to solve for the last thirty-five years. I began my efforts towards understanding Islam and working for its revival when I was a youth of twenty-three and ever since then, I have dedicated my whole life for this task. I never had any faith in mere defensive tactics or a rear-guard action. I have launched a three-proponed offensive. On the one hand, I have ruthlessly attacked - the ideological foundations of Western culture. On the other hand, I have expounded as fully as I know how, the ideological bases of Islam. I have explained at great length what an Islamic way of life and how in every respect it is superior to Western ways mean. Thirdly, I have offered practical Islamic solutions of important problems which previously even observant Muslims could see no alternative but to follow the West. As a result of this work, there are millions of Muslims in Pakistan and India from every walk of life who share with me the zeal and yearning for an Islamic order. About twenty-five of my Urdu books have been translated into Arabic and a large proportion of the Muslim public in the Arabic-speaking

countries appreciate and sympathize with my ideas. I bow my head before Allah and praise Him for all this. Unfortunately, as yet very few of my works have been translated into English. If you could learn Urdu, I think that my books would help you in your fight for Islam in America.

I wonder if you know that since 1941 an organization-*Jama'at-e- Islami* - has been working in the Indo-Pak sub-continent. *Jama’at-e-Islami* strive to propagate and implement the ideology which I have presented in my writings. After Partition in 1947, this organization was also split into two separate *parties-Jama'at-e-Islami Pakistan and Jama'at-e-Islami Hind.* President Ayub Khan has banned the former along with all other political parties since the promulgation of Martial Law in 1958; the latter is still working in India under its own independent leadership. I have told you this story to impress upon your mind the fact that in order to gain some positive results; it is necessary to struggle patiently for many long years. Moreover, to achieve success in a cause, it is essential to equip oneself adequately in the intellectual as well as the moral sphere. It is a hard, unremitting struggle all the way. You

have just begun. I fully realize how difficult and painful it is for a young, unmarried female convert to work for Islam in a country like America, but when you have embraced Islam and have clearly grasped the duties it entails, you should seek the help of Almighty Allah and try to assume all the responsibilities He has chosen to give you. The more serious and sincere you are in your efforts, the greater the help you will receive from your Lord which will come from sources and ways you and could not possibly imagine beforehand.

I must confess that with my indifferent health, I am compelled to perform multifarious duties. Daily I have much to read and write and every day many people write me letters and come to see me, so if I am late in replying to you, do not mind and continue to keep me informed about your welfare and activities. I am keenly interested in your struggles and trials for Islam. I also want to publish in my Urdu monthly, *Tarjuman ul-Quran,* extracts of your essays and letters, omitting, of course, intimate personal details. I hope you have no objection to that. May I ask you whether you have assumed an Islamic name?

With salaams and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

ABUL ALA

New York, May 29, 1961

**

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum.

I was very happy to receive your letter of May 20th and feel relieved to know that you are recovering from your illness. I hope you will feel well soon again.

You have my full permission to print in your *Tarjuman ul Quran* any part of my letters or articles you may wish.

Of all the letters I have received commenting on my short story, yours was the only one that showed an appreciative understanding of what I was trying to say. As I already told you, this short story is the concluding chapter of my novel, *Ahmad Khalil: The Biography of*

a Palestinian Arab Refugee which I began to write back in August 1949 at the age of fifteen. The first part deals with his early childhood in a small village in southern Palestine, his home, surroundings and the various members of his family, ending with their tragic expulsion from their homes during the 1948 Palestine war and the total destruction of the village (and with it, an entire way of life) by the superior military might of the Zionists. The second half begins when Ahmad Khalil, now eighteen years old, has been married for two years, decides to leave the refugee camp and without Government permission, takes the surviving remnants of his family to make the pilgrimage to Mecca "illegally" and once there, he decides to make Medina his permanent home until it would be possible for him to return to Palestine. The remainder of the novel concentrates on his cousin, Rashid who was throughout his life his inseparable friend and companion, his mentally-ill younger brother, Khalifa, the growing cruelty and unbelief of his only surviving son, Ismail, and his adopted son, Abdar-Raziq, a blind theology student of al-Azhar who became his sole comfort. The first part of the story emphasizes the evils of Western materialism

in the guise of Zionist imperialistic aims and the concluding chapters, the harmful effects of the oil industry in Saudi Arabia as it affects the daily life and the ultimate fate of this Arab Muslim family. My novel expresses the same ideas as your own books, only in story-form. For obvious reasons, (aside from its literary merit or lack of it) *Ahmad Khalil* would be highly unpopular here and I would not stand a chance with American publishers.

Now I am full of plans to compile another book, which will be entitled, *Islam Attacked from without and Within: An Anthology of Anti-Islamic Propaganda.* My aim here will not only show in detail how Islam in all its aspects has been attacked by Western "orientalists" and westernized Muslims from within; I want above all else, to expose the mentality of our adversaries. It does us no good merely to condemn our enemies. In order to fight our enemies effectively I think it is essential for us to understand them and to know how their minds work. Psychology is one at the most fascinating subjects and I want to apply its principles here so we can know specifically what motivates these people to do as they do. Among the authors I intend to quote at length are Wilfred Cantwell

Smith, Director of the Islamic Institute at McGill University in Canada, H. G. Wells, famous English historian, Arnold Toynbee, William Douglas, judge now serving on the American Supreme Court, Julian Huxley, biologist and former Director of UNESCO from 1946-1948, Albert Schweitzer, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt and John S. Bandeau, former professor at the American college of Cairo and now serving as American Ambassador to the United Arab Republic. Among the Westernized Muslims I will include Ziya Gokalp, Dr. Taha Hussein, and Asaf A. Fyzee, vice-chancellor of Kashmir University. Each quote will be preceded by a few introductory paragraphs and followed by a detailed commentary. At the beginning of the anthology I want to write a long preface and at the conclusion a lucid and concise epilogue.

I have just read a most illuminating book by the late Muhammad Ali, formerly the head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement entitled *The Anti Christ Gog and Magog* which explains why the prophecies of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) could only mean the domination of Western materialism over the

world. As regards my apprehension that so-called "technical assistance" for the "economic development" of the "under-developed" countries only means the spread of Western materialism, our Holy Prophet knew this perfectly when he is reported to have said:

> He (the *Dajjal)* will give them (the needy Muslims) to eat but he will also make of them unbelievers.

Unfortunately, the whole book was ruined at the end when the author tries to convince his readers that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian was the promised *Imam-i-Mehdi.*

For the last several months I have been trying to make contact with Sayyid Qutb who, as you know better than anybody else, has been imprisoned under Nasser ever since *al Ikhwan at Muslimun* was banned in 1954. Although he has not been able to write to me himself, just yesterday, I received a beautiful letter from his sister, Amina Qutb, who told me that my letters had been delivered to her brother in his prison cell and that she wanted to write to me on his behalf. Sayyid Qutb, a scholar and the author of a number of books,

is a great admirer of you and specially recommended your books to me. How tragic it is that in the so-called "Muslim" countries, Islam is much more severely persecuted than in non-Muslim lands!

I am enclosing a copy of the weekly bulletin of the local Unitarian Church, which my parents and elder sisters are thinking of becoming members. Until now, I was always under the impression that the Unitarian Church was a Christian sect, which rejected the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ, revering Jesus as a Prophet and emphasizing the unity of God. However, the church my parents and sister attend proclaims an ideology no different from the agnostic humanism of the Ethical Culture movement.

Five days ago on the *Eid al Adha* after the prayers, in the presence of two of my Muslim friends for witnesses, I formally pronounced the *Shahadah, which* makes me a full-fledged Muslim. Then I received at The Islamic Mission of America in Brooklyn from Shaikh Daud Ahmad Faisal my Islamic Certificate of Adoption. My Muslim name is *Maryam Jamilah* with which I will henceforth sign all my correspondence and writings.

However, since my parents do not want to call me by my Arabic name and the other members of my family feel the same way, I shall not insist on it but with you and all my brothers and sisters in faith, I shall use only any new name of which I am very proud

Hoping that your health will continue to improve.

Yours in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

**

Lahore, June 20, 1961

Dear Maryam Jameelah

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

I received your letter dated May 29th and am heartily pleased to know that you have become an integral part of the great fraternity of Islam by proclaiming *Shahadah* and have assumed an Islamic name. All this was a natural consequence of your ideas and convictions. I solemnly pray to Allah that He may accept your sincerity, give you strength

to live and work for Islam and may enable you to brave your hostile surroundings steadfastly.

I am grateful to you for your anxiety about my health. Thank God my health has now returned to normal. *Inshaallah* I intend to leave for Africa in July.

Thank you for your permission to publish your essays and portions of your letters. I think they will serve as an eye-opener to, the Muslim youth here, which will provide them with a striking contrast that while they are trying to westernize themselves despite their birth in a Muslim society, here is a young woman born in a "reformed" Jewish home in modern America who has been struggling for the Truth and who is striving to practice it when she has found it out at last. I hope your example will teach them a lesson.

Please send me the manuscript of your novel *Ahmad Khalil. I* will try to find the time to read it and then show it to my publishers, Messrs. Islamic Publications Ltd. here in Lahore. I will be pleased if they agree to print it.

Your anthology of anti-Islamic propaganda could be very useful and instructive. There are several facts, which you should not fail to mention. The first is that the Communists in the East and the democracies in the West join hands in their common enmity against Islam. Secondly, whenever there is a departure or a deviation of Muslims away from Islam, it is acclaimed loudly in Western circles which makes the modernist Muslims still bolder and more audacious in their mischief-making. According to these critics, departure from Islam is synonymous with "enlightenment" and “progress" and in their over-anxiety to win the applause of their admirers, modernist Muslims grow more and more zealous in their "reforms". These only produce bitter wives of resentment among the majority of their own Muslim countrymen. The rulers are waging open warfare against the ruled and as a result or this continuous internal conflict; the Muslim states are devoid of vitality. Another consequence of such an unwise attitude is that the so-called "free-world block" is rendering its own defense line against Communism weak and vulnerable. Thus far, Communism has mostly persecuted the Muslims only in the countries it has over-run but the way the non-Communist bloc is

playing havoc among independent Muslim ranks, its very goal of common defense is being defeated thereby. True Muslims fail to see any difference between these two power blocs and they are compelled to believe that both are in essence the same. In the presence of such disgust and deep revulsion of the overwhelming majority of the Muslim peoples, the political alliances of the rulers are artificial and have lost all their meaning.

Now I turn to your question about the *Dajjal.* In Arabic, the word *Dajjal* literally means fraud and cheating. From this point of view, every fraudulent person, group or nation is *Dajjal. However,* according to the traditions of our Holy Prophet, *al-Dajjal* (The Deceiver) must be a single person. During the leadership of *al-Dajjal* as foretold by our Holy Prophet, true Muslims will suffer severe persecution. When I consider all the details about *al-Dajjal* or the Anti-Christ in the Hadith, I am led to believe that he has not come as yet but I think the time has arrived when this prophecy will soon be fulfilled. I think that *al-Dajjal* will make his appearance in the land of "Israel".

I am happy to learn about your contact with Sayyid Qutb and his relations. Although we have had so far no opportunity to meet each other face to face, yet each one of us knows the other fully. He sent his books to me from prison and I met his brother, Muhammad Qutb when I visited Cairo in 1960. Ordeals of fire and sword through which the *Ikhwan* and in fact, all genuine Muslims everywhere must endure, should not surprise you. When a Muslim is nursed and raised under the influence of *Kufr* and he holds aloft the banner of *Kufr* in both hands, he goes to such extremes in persecuting his co-religionists as even non-Muslims would not dare to do, but sooner or later the time is sure to come when everybody must reap what he has been sowing.

Praying for your steady progress on the path of Islam.

Sincerely yours,

ABUL ALA

New York, July 11, 1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum.

Thank you for your letter of June 20th and I am especially glad to hear that your health has returned to normal so that you will be able to go on your African tour. I am sending you this letter by surface post because I do not expect your reply before you return to Lahore in September.

From what I have gathered from my reading, Africa appears to be the brightest spot on the map so far as the prospects for Islam are concerned. Particularly in Nigeria, under the capable leadership of Ahmadu Bello and Abu Bakr Tawafa Belawa. Islam is spreading by such leaps and bounds that for every pagan, who turns to Christianity, ten embrace Islam. Although the Catholic and Protestant missionaries have vast wealth and support behind them from the Western powers and have monopolized education, hospitals and philanthropic works for almost a century, they can win only a handful of converts while within the space of a few weeks or months

whole villages go over to Islam. Recently *The New York Times* published an article in which the correspondent interviewed several Roman Catholic missionaries in a Nigerian town who informed him that most of the Africans they had baptized were now regularly attending the local mosque and observing the fast of Ramadan. I think one of the most important reasons for this is the fact that racial discrimination is accepted by the Christians and all their churches are rigidly segregated, whereas in the mosque, the African knows he will be welcomed and made to feel at home. If Islamic missionary work could be effectively organized in Arneric4, it would find the most fertile field among its twenty million black people, particularly the poor, the unemployed, the despised and the outcasts who crowd the great ghettos in New York and Chicago.

I have included in my anthology of anti-Islamic propaganda an editorial in praise of President Habib Bourguiba's campaign against Ramadan that appeared in the *Islamic Review* which I think is disgraceful and inexcusable. Most of the contributors to my anthology are either connected with the American University of Beirut or the

American College in Cairo. Both these institutions are Protestant missionary enterprises and although they actually succeed in winning very few converts to Christianity, they have achieved great success in making the Muslim students feel hostile towards Islam and winning them over to the Western way of life. The other day I met a Muslim student from Saudi Arabia now doing graduate work in the field of' education at Columbia University who received his B. A. degree from the American University of Beirut and told me that all Muslim students are required to attend Christian services at the chapel. Those who refuse to go must choose the alternative of a compulsory course in "Christian morals."

After I learned how to use the typewriter at business school, I thought I would have no trouble finding employment as a secretary. In my search for employment, I went first to *The Arab Information Center* where I thought that my intense interest in the Arabic-speaking countries and Islam could be of some value but as soon as they found out that I was a Jewish convert to Islam and had no sympathy with President Nasser or his brand of "Arabism", they gave me such a cold

reception, I never went back. Next, I visited the New York headquarters of *The American Friends of the Middle East,* where the two pretty young American girls at the front desk frankly told me that they considered all orthodox religions as obsolete and until the Arabs put Islam behind them and cast it off like a worn-out garment, they could never achieve economic development or a higher standard of living. Soon I discovered that the organizations in New York dealing with the Near East are either controlled by the Zionists, Christian missionaries or are purely commercial.

The other day I passed the New York Tunisian Trade Center. Attracted by the exhibition of magnificent Hand-woven rugs and hammered copper trays in the window, I decided to go inside and have a look around. I never received such a shock in my life when I saw nothing but long shelves front floor to ceiling crowded with bottles of wine, whisky, rum and beer. I asked the lady in charge at the front desk if these were the products of independent Tunisia. She told me that this mass-production of alcoholic beverages both for domestic use and for export was proof of the economic "progress" President Habib

Bourguiba had brought to Tunisia. She said that Islam was only a relic of the Middle Ages and the sooner dispensed with, the better. Noticing the woman's heavy French accent, I asked her if she were French citizen and she replied vigorously in the affirmative. She told me that the Tunisian Government employed her because President Bourguiba wished to promote the friendliest relations with France.

This afternoon I intend to go to New York University, where I was once a student, to have a talk with a Jewish boy there who two weeks ago pronounced the *Shahadah* at the mosque. When his mother discovered that he had embraced Islam, she took him at once to the synagogue where the Rabbi forced him to re-convert back to Judaism. He had no choice because his mother (his father is dead) threatened to withhold all financial support from him if he continued in Islam. Since he is a medical student, he will not be able to support himself for some years to come. I can only give thanks to Allah that my parents are not so narrow-minded and intolerant as this mother.

Eagerly awaiting your reply in September and all the interesting details of your African journey.

Yours in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

**

Lahore, September 29, 1961

Dear Maryam Jameelah,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Your letter dated July 11th reached me just a few days ago which shows how slow surface post travels from your country to mine. The manuscript of your novel, *Ahmad Khalil,* arrived more than a month ago and is now with Islamic Publications Ltd. As soon as they return it to me, I will try to find the time to read your story and then give you my comments.

You will be surprised to know that because the Government all of a sudden decided to

expunge the names of every African and Arab country from my passport, I was forced to cancel my trip to Africa. Since then I have received numerous letters from these countries, as well as Pakistani protesting against such arbitrary restrictions on my movements abroad. The only people who are happy about this are the Christian missionaries and *Qadianis* who regard Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (India) as a new prophet and consider every man or woman who does not believe in him as *kaffr.*

Without any proper organization or financial support, Islam has been steadily gaining ground in Africa despite the most intense efforts and huge expenditures on the part of Christian missions. This fact speaks volumes for the contrast between the intrinsic merits of the respective faiths. Christianity is so weak that despite so many Christian schools, hospitals, organized missionary work and the support of the colonial governments, Africans seldom embrace it warmly and even those who do, are soon disillusioned and begin to renounce it. On the other hand, although Islam is neither being presented to them in its full beauty nor are most of the Muslims worthy examples of Islamic behavior and we

have very few trained missionaries, the only Islam these Africans know is the influence of simple-minded, mostly uneducated Muslims through personal contact only. But even that much is sufficient to attract the Africans, Thus I yearned to organize a planned program for the dissemination of Islam there, but alas, my hands have been tied. Nevertheless I can never forget this cause which *inshallah I* will try to serve as best I can even though placed at such a distance as I am.

You would not be surprised by Working *Islamic Review's* support of Habib Bourguiba if you knew the school of thought to which this magazine belongs. They are our own countrymen and we know them only too well. They belong to the Lahore group of the followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad Qadiani who had the audacity to lay a false claim to the prophethood. The main body of his followers at regular print openly proclaims the Mirza as a Prophet and those who reject his claim as "Kaffrs" or unbelievers. The son of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (Bashir-ud-din Mahmud) leads this group. The splinter sect who controls *The Islamic Review* at the Woking Mosque in England hesitates to declare outright that the Mirza was a prophet

but only *"Nabi"* in a metaphorical sense but they hail him as the Promised Messiah, *Mujaddid and Mehdi.*

Both these groups and Qadianis were great favorites with the British government during their rule over the undivided Indo-Pak sub-continent. They neither enjoyed nor only tacit support but positive protection and encouragement from British imperialism. Inside the country they were favored with responsible posts and outside the country, the most trusted loyal and obedient servants of His Majesty's empire. Their "Islamic" propaganda was tolerated only because it was so harmless and innocuous and their missions served as an effective disguise for their numerous and nameless services to Imperialism. Maulana Muhammad Ali, who translated the Holy Quran into English, was the leader of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement which established the "Woking Mission and Literary Trust" in England and publishes *The Islamic Review.*

These people spare no effort to show themselves off as enlightened advanced and progressive liberals according to Western standards. That is why they enthusiastically

acclaim every step adopted in Pakistan or other Muslim lands to "reform" Islam. Recently our family laws have been "reformed" to make them more acceptable to Western criteria, which those who control *The Islamic Review* loudly applaud.

Your assessment of the Christian universities in Beirut and Cairo is quite correct. You will be interested to know that in Pakistan the Christian schools and colleges have been producing similar results for the last century and a half. Our social elite, economically privileged and top Government servants entrust their children when only four or five years old to these institutions. They learn to speak English instead of Urdu and indeed most of them cannot even converse or write in the national languages. They are completely alienated from their faith and cultural traditions. They celebrate Christmas and ignore the Eid festivals. They are ignorant even of the rudiments of Islam. When they reach adulthood, they become our leaders, rulers and builders of our destinies.

The impact of our national educational system, which is our heritage of British domination, is no less devastating. Although the Government schools do not convert Muslims to Christianity, the practical result of its secular materialistic atmosphere produces ignorance; apathy and indifference, The majority of our educated youth remains Muslims not because of this education but inspite of it. Since you are a newcomer into the fold of Islam, I want you to understand the real reasons why Muslims are becoming modernized and de-Islamized and why their tongues and pens are serving the cause of *Kufr. "*

I feel deeply worried over the problems you are facing. I fully realize the ordeals, which a person must endure when he or she embraces Islam in a land of Kufr and a woman faces a thousand-fold, more trials than a man. Through bitter personal experience, you have come to know how tolerant and broadminded these moderns Westerners are!' You have also encountered the type of people who are representing Muslim countries in foreign lands. Although extremely difficult times are ahead of you, I think these experiences will stand you in

good stead in this world and surely will earn you a lasting reward in the Hereafter.

I believe that if you had accepted my invitation to come to Lahore, you could have avoided these troubles and I could have helped you in every possible way but even in America if you think I crender any practical service to you, please tell me frankly and I will not hesitate to do whatever I can. May Allah in His abounding mercy help you and grant you patience and perseverance.

With all my salaams,

Your brother in Islam,

ABUL ALA

**

New York, October 9, 1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum.

Thank you for your letter of September 29th.

Every Friday noon I attend the Muslim Students Association at Columbia University for *Jumaa Salat.* Each week a different student takes his turn delivering his own *Khutbah* (sermon) and leading the prayer as *Imam.*

As I am female and so could not deliver the *Khutbah* in person, when my turn came, a kind student from the United Arab Republic offered to deliver my *Khutbah* on my behalf. Entitled "Can Islam Be Reconciled with the Spirit of the Twentieth century?" I analyzed the seven most important proposals for "modernizing" Islam as repeatedly advocated by the "Progressives." These were:

(1) the permanent abolition of the Khalifate:

(2) the abolition of the *Shariah* and its replacement with modern western secular legal systems;

(3) the substitution of the concept of universal Muslim brotherhood (Ummah) with territorial or racial nationalism;

(4) official translations of Quran without Arabic text and the replacement of the Arabic script with the Roman alphabet;

(5) the view that raising the material standard of living to Western levels through industrialization should be the supreme goal of the Government to which all other considerations must be sacrificed or subordinated;

(6) the so-called “ emancipation" of women;

(7) the adoption of Western clothing and living habits. In my *Khutbah I* showed how each of these proposals, if carried to their logical conclusions, would bring about the complete destruction of Islamic civilization. However, the students violently disagreed. They told me that as soon as they completed their studies in America and returned home, they would spare no efforts to impose all these reforms One student from Afghanistan assured me that what his country needed more than anything also was another Ataturk! Most Muslim students whom I have met share the same view and I must confess it sometimes makes me feel quite despondent.

Enclosed is the manuscript of my *Khutbah*[*]. Please let me know what you think of it.

Yours in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

**

Lahore, October 24, 1961

My dear sister-in-Islam

Assalaam alaikum,

Thank you for your letter of October 9th and the manuscript of your *Khutbah.*

Your description of the Muslim students you have met at Colombia University is exactly according to my expectations. I have made a deep study of the system of education through which the rising generation is passing here and in the Arab world. The inevitable consequences of this system result in the student's deep prejudice against Islam and its historical and cultural heritage. At the first opportunity they are eager to mutilate its shape and distort its spirit. They are mentally degraded and morally debased. When they

return home, they capture the most conspicuous and powerful positions in our national life, which is the major cause of the unrelenting warfare between the rulers and the ruled. But I assure you, there is a bright side, too, and from these very same schools, colleges and universities, there are students with a deep yearning for the establishment of an Islamic order. The same is the case in the Arab world, Turkey, Indonesia and all other Muslim countries. These students, particularly those belonging the *Jamiat ul Tulaba,* keep in close contact with me and I have great hopes for them. Unfortunately, these students have slim opportunity to go to study in America or Europe because the patronage, which makes such visits possible, is reserved for the spoilt sons of the soil. That is why you have not met such youth in New York.

I wanted to expedite the decision about the printing of your novel, *Ahmad Khalil,* in your favor but alas, only a few days ago, Mian Tufail Muhammad, the Managing Director of Islamic Publications was arrested and is now being imprisoned under the Public Safety Act. This Act, the legacy of British rule, enables a person to be arbitrarily imprisoned

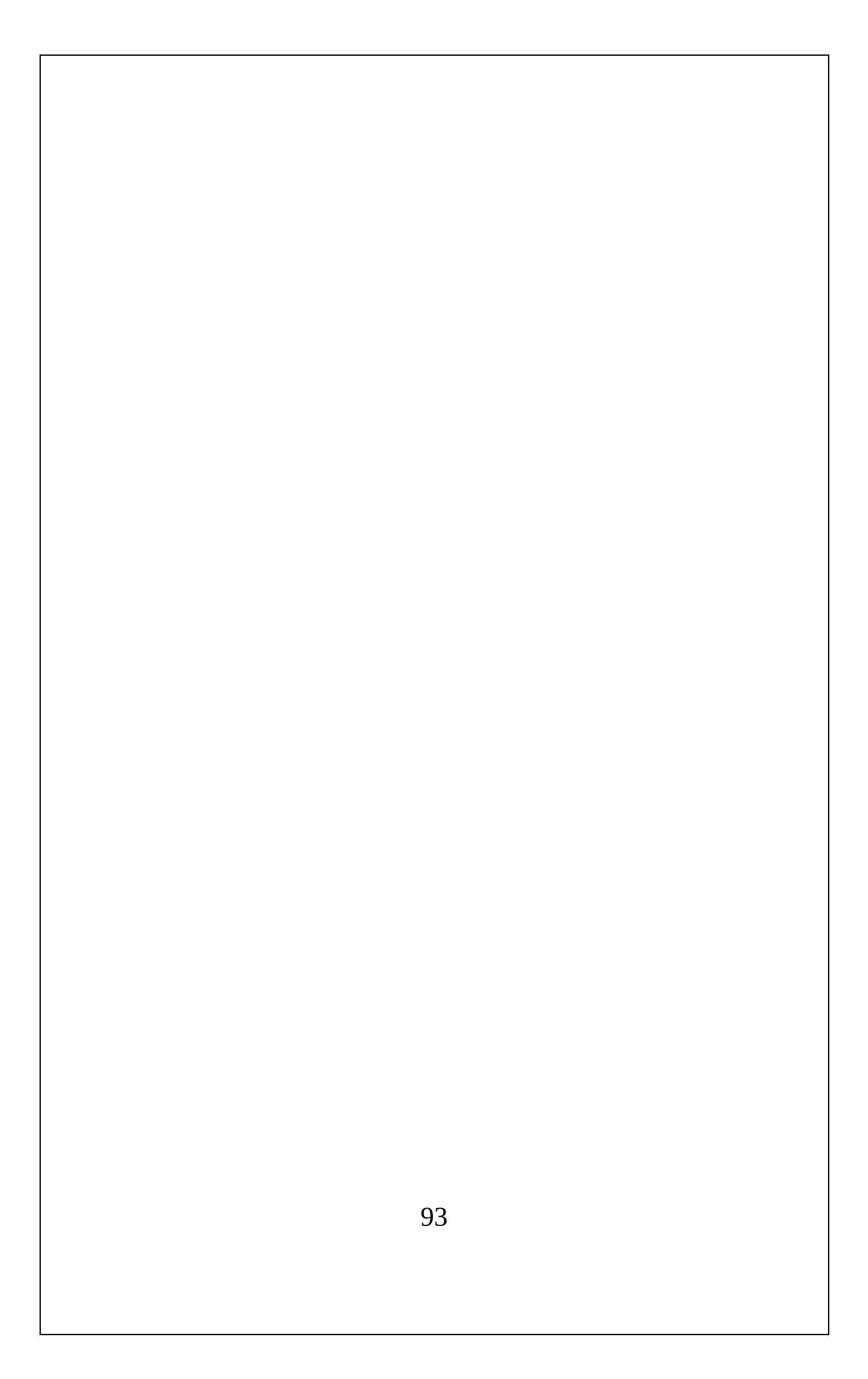
without trial. The authorities simply seize him and put him behind bars as long as they please. Mian Tufail Muhammad has been a close associate of mine for the last twenty years. As a result of his detention for daring to publish a pamphlet criticizing the Family Law Ordinance, all business of Islamic Publications has been dislocated indefinitely.

I have studied your Friday *Khutbah* carefully and assure you that what you have said are precisely the views I have been preaching continuously for more than thirty years. That is why the modernists fear me as a "danger." I am amazed how a girl born and brought up in America has been able to attain such an accurate insight into the problem. What you said in your *Khutbah* couldn't but win my deepest admiration and I only pray to Allah that he may give you more and more wisdom and steadfastness to expound and promote the cause of Islam.

With salaams and best wishes,

Your brother-in-Islam,

ABUL ALA



New York, November 8,1961

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Thank you for your letter of October 24th.

I am glad that you oppose the apologetic, polemical approach as much as I do. When I first started reading what Islamic literature was available in English back in 1953, my Muslim friends and acquaintances all urged me to read Sir Syed Ameer Ali's *The Spirit of Islam.* I did so and when I finished, I was convinced it was one of the worst books about Islam I had ever read. My Muslim friends were amazed by this negative reaction and could not understand why I did not like the book.

Take, for example, the question of polygamy. Even Muslims like Dr. Hoballah, who directs the, Islamic Center in Washington, told me that Islam permits polygamy only under rare exceptional circumstances. Some modernists even go so far as to interpret the verse of the Quran which says that you cannot do equal

justice to more than one wife however much you may wish to do so as an absolute prohibition of plural marriage. Typical of the apologetic viewpoint is the following quote from Muhammad Ali Lahore’s commentary on his English translation of Holy Qur'an (pp. 187-188):

> "Surah IV: 3 permits polygamy only under certain circumstances ... It would be thus clear that the permission to have more wives than one was given under the peculiar circumstances of the Muslim society then existing... It may be added here that polygamy in Islam is both in theory and in practice an exception and not a rule...”

The strongest argument against such sophistries is that that none of the reputable commentators on the Holy Qur'an in all Muslim history ever expounded such an interpretation of this verse until the Muslim world fell under the domination of European imperialism. Nowhere in the Qur'an or Hadith literature do I find polygamy condemned as an absolute evil in itself nor does the question ever arise of the necessity to restrict

it to exceptional circumstances. The exact words of the verse in question (IV : 129) are;

> "Ye will not be able to deal equally between your wives however much ye wish to do so. But turn not all together from (the other wife) leaving her as in suspense. If you do good and keep from evil, lo! Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful."

In other words, because no two human beings are exactly alike, a husband cannot possibly regard several different wives with equal affection but this verse does not prohibit him from plural marriage behe cannot help but love one wife more than the others. No! The Quran only enjoins justice and kindness for all of them and exhorts the husband to deal with them with as fairly as possible. Marmaduke Pickthall's introductory notes to his English translation of the Holy Quran interpret much more faithfully the verse dealing with this subject. He writes:

> "In Islam sanctity has never been identified with celibacy. For Christendom the strictest

religious ideal has been celibacy; monogamy is already a concession to human nature. For Muslims monogamy is the ideal and polygamy is the concession to human nature. Having set in his marriage to Khadijah a great example of monogamy marriage, the Prophet was also to set a great example of polygamy marriage by following which men of that temperament could live righteous lives. Islam did not institute polygamy. It limited an already existing institution by restricting the number of a man's legal wives to four and by giving to every woman a legal personality and legal rights which had to be respected and making every man legally responsible for his conduct towards every woman. Whether polygamy or monogamy should prevail in a particular country or historical period is a matter of social and economic convenience."

I wonder if you read in the April-May 1961 issue *of The voice of Islam* published by the *Jamiat-ul-Falah* in Karachi the essay, "Punishments in Islam" by Muhammad Shibli which at once won my admiration for such a clear and straight-forward presentation of the logical reasons why Islam has prescribed such allegedly "barbaric" punishments as stoning to death for adultery, amputation of the hand for theft, public flogging for fornication and wine-drinking, etc. Ninety-nine out of a hundred contemporary Muslim writers would try to explain away the Quranic penal law as obsolete for the modern age. Typical of these people was the angry letter to the Editor in the August issue of the same magazine castigating Muhammad Shibli for not regarding the secular Western legal systems as superior to the *Shariah.*

As President Habib Bourguiba Declared: "Up to now Islam has been understood according to the way it was interpreted by the *Ulema,* a static interpretation kept unchanged throughout all these decadent centuries. That old interpretation is outdated ... In other words, the modernists mean to tell us that all our *Mujaddids* throughout all the previous twelve hundred years were thoroughly

mistaken about the true meaning or the Holy Quran and only now for the first time have these modernists attained the correct perspective!

These are some of the reasons why I consider the apologetic approach the height of intellectual dishonesty, moral cowardiness, spiritual blasphemy and hypocrisy.

When these "progressive" Muslim students tell me that their countries cannot afford to be religious until economic development and a higher standard of living is first achieved, I cannot help but recall the words of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) as recorded in the New Testament when he told his followers: "Seek *ye first* the kingdom of heaven and then all these (material) things shall be added unto you…”. But the "Progressives" would have it the other way around!. They assure us that *after* they attain material prosperity, they will have more time to concentrate on spiritual matters. But experience shows that this is never the case, because the person who adopts that attitude becomes so preoccupied with materialistic pursuits that the spiritual side of life is entirely forgotten.

The incredible reasoning to which these people resort is illustrated when my Arabic teacher at the mosque in New York told me that Kemal Ataturk prohibited the Turks from performing *Haj* because the economic situation was so desperate and people were starving so that the Government could not permit any capital taken out of the country. "This was entirely justified," argued my teacher, "and in conformity to the spirit of Islam because *Haj* is obligatory only for those who can afford it." What he failed to mention was that *Ataturk's decree banned only the pilgrimage to Mecca!* All other travel abroad, especially to Western Europe and America, was not only permitted but also encouraged with official patronage.

At the meetings of Tile Muslim Students Association at Columbia University, the favorite target is the traditional Islamic education such as that imparted at al-Azhar, Deoband or other lesser *Madrassahs,* which in their emphasis on memorization, are criticized for stifling all intellectual independence and creative and original thought. These students are blissfully unaware that the criticism with which they attack the traditional *madrassah* is a

thousand times truer in the case of themselves! Among these western-educated students, I cannot find the least trace of intellectual independence or creative and original thought. They never do their own thinking but merely repeat in the most mechanical way what they are taught like parrots! That is why though American universities like Columbia may teem with students of Muslim origin, one seeks in vain among them for any true scholars.

The literal meaning of "Islam" is *submission to the will of Allah.* It is not possible to become close to Allah without submitting one's self to observe His law and follow His guidance in practical daily life. Such a person will never doubt that wisdom (as did one student at Colombia University who told me it is quite permissible now for Muslims to eat pork because since breeders today know how to raise pigs hygienically, the danger of disease has been eliminated! The true Muslim will never discard any Quranic injunction as no longer relevant to present-day life. His supreme goal in life is to live the way Allah wants him to live and nothing will sadden him more than displeasing his Lord. He will not regard the law as a burden but as

a joy. It is at this juncture where Orthodox Judaism and Islam meet on common ground. Every day in synagogue the pious Jew recites the following commandments of the Law of Moses:

"Thou shalt *love* thy Lord, thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul and with all thy might. And these words which I (God) command you (Moses) shall be upon thy heart. Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children and thou shalt speak of them when thou art sitting in thy house, when thou guest on a journey, when thou lies down and when thou rise up. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand and they shalt be for frontlets between thine eyes. Thou shalt inscribe them upon the doorposts of thy house and upon thy gates." (Deuteronomy VI: 4-9).

the other hand, the modernists, instead of submitting to Allah, expect Allah to submit to them!

I am enclosing the editorial of the July 1961 issue of *The Islamic Review* in praise of the new Pakistani Family Laws Ordinance. Please comment.

Yours in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH.

**

Lahore, December 16, 1961

Dear Maryam Jameelah,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Thank you for your letter dated November 8th, as well as the enclosed editorial on the Family Laws Ordinance in the *Islamic Review.* Under separate cover I also received the manuscript of your essay, "The Significance of the *Taqbir*[*]*.*

I have carefully read this article and agree to each and every word of it. The Holy Prophet has categorically prohibited Muslims from drawing pictures or sculpturing statues of animals or human beings. History bears witness to the fact that picture making is the first step towards *"shirk"* and idolatry. Idolatry does not necessarily mean to perform ritualistic worship before an object. When pictures of leaders and famous personalities are prominently hung and distributed

everywhere, it surely results in mental slavery and godly reverence for those persons and a firm imprint "greatness" (instead of Allah's greatness) upon their minds and souls. This is certainly a form of idol-worship.

When Russia captured Poland, thousands of Stali's pictures were imported into every town and village of the land. Nazi soldiers used to wear Hitler's photo on their bosoms and if they were injured and breathed their last in hospitals, they were found kissing these portraits and placing them on their eyes. Pictures on coins and postage stamps of national leaders are symbols of their worldly sovereignty and when their pictures are shown on the cinema screen, the audience is required to stand up at once. If all this is not *Shirk* then what else is it? The Nazis, the Fascists, the Communists, the Kamalists and the Nasserites have demonstrated the uses, or more appropriately, the abuses of pictures and demonstrated their disastrous consequences so clearly that I do not think that there should exist the least doubt in any sane mind why Islam bans pictures and statues.

How can anybody who knows the difference between *Tawheed and shirk* ever tolerate picture making when its results are so glaringly manifest today? After all, why did Khrushchev in his denunciation of Stalin at once order the removal of pictures and statues of Stalin from all public places? Does it not mean that Khrushchev was aware of how the divinity of this false god was engraved on the minds of Russians from these very pictures? From earliest times, the picture has served as the greatest vehicle for spreading immorality and lewdness in the world. Wine, music, dancing, indecent literature, picture and statue have always been are now more than ever before, the most potent instigators of adultery and fornication. If the modernists in Muslim lands insist upon indulgence in such practices, despite the clearest prohibitions of the Holy Prophet, in order to propitiate the whims of the "times" and be praised as "up-to-date", they cannot do so without violating the values and principles of Islam. How any such persons can persuade themselves and others that inspite of this basic change, they are as good Muslims as ever is beyond my comprehension.

I completely agree with all you have written about apologetics. There are two underlying causes for this sort of reasoning. Either it results from faulty understanding or ignorance of Islam or it is the natural result of the defeatist mentality, which blindly accepts the values of the dominant culture as the supreme criterion. Consequently, Western civilization has become the judge of the merits and "faults" of Islam - not *vice versa.* The pioneer of apologetics in the Indo-Pak, sub-continent was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his colleague, Chiragh Ali. Later Sir Sayyid Ameer Ali followed suit. (Ameer Ali and Chiragh Ali were both *Shiahs)* Finally the entire Aligarh School raised its chorus to tender apologies on behalf of Islam to the West. Muhammad Ali Jauhar (a follower of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad and the translator of the Holy Quran into English with whom some Western authors confuse with his name-sake, Muhammad Ali Jauhar (who was a renowned statesman and freedom-fighter) substantially adhered to the views of the Aligarh School. In Egypt, Shaikh Muhammad Abduh adopted a similar line of compromise and thus opened the door wide for the westernizers in the Arabic-speaking world who came after him.

Once they began to proceed along this path, they found it almost impossible to set any limits for their extravagant sophistries. *Jihad* was interpreted as only a "defensive" war. Islamic teachings pertaining to war prisoners (slaves) were given the most strange and absurd meanings. Polygamy was halfheartedly conceded as only an emergency measure, the sooner declared unlawful, the better. Miracles mentioned in the Holy Quran were either denied outright or fantastic attempts were made to explain them away as natural phenomena. Angels were said to be merely "forces of nature" and Revelation *(Wahy)* the subjective result of extraordinary mental activity projected outwards resembling the hallucinations of the insane. Vanquished politically, the Muslims suffered no less serious defeat in the realm of thought and because of their mental paralysis, they could not grasp the guidance of Allah to His last Prophet.

What you wrote about polygamy was absolutely correct. I would only add that verse 3 of *Surah* IV was not revealed to legalize polygamy. Divine law never prohibited polygamy and the Shariahs of all the prophets allowed it. Most of the Prophets

had more than one wife. Before this verse descended upon the Holy Prophet, he. had three wives (Saudah, Ayesha and Umm Salamah - upon whom be the peace of Allah). Most of the companions of the Prophet were also polygamous. Thus there was no need to legalize an already lawful and well-recognized practice. The verse in question was revealed when many women in Medina had been widowed during the battle of Uhud and children left fatherless. Confronted with this problem, the Muslims were directed to solve it by dint of an already established and prevalent institution and to take two, three or even four wives from among the widows. As a result, the widows and orphans, instead of being left derelicts, were amicably absorbed among the various families. If this guidance from God, implied any new legislation, it is not permission for polygamy, but the restriction of the number of wives to four and a further stipulation that if a husband is not doing justice to all his wives, he must either treat them fairly or he should have only one wife. These two above-mentioned injunctions were not known nor recognized by the pagan Arabs and the present Bible also fails to mention them.

The people who are trying to reinterpret Islam, I do not know whom they are trying to deceive - Allah or their own selves ? But I assure you that this impious fraud cannot last long. Because of their political hold, they try to thrust their views down the throats of the Muslim common folk and the Western press is patting them on the back. But there is a strong wave of resentment among the common people and public opinion in all Muslim lands against them is so intense as you cannot imagine while in America. When you go to any Muslim country, you will see that not only the simple-minded but even a majority of the modern-educated section is sick and tired of these novel interpretations of Islam which are an outrage against both its form and spirit. Those youth you meet at Columbia University are not the true representatives of Muslim public opinion. They speak only for a tiny minority who is regarded as a liability rather than an asset by their co-religionists. These persons, after returning to their native lands, live like foreigners. Their habits, tastes, behavior and thinking are all diametrically opposed to their fellow-Muslims. They do not mix with others and others do not mix with them. They are a native foreign race which was bred in the

Muslim lands as, the by-product of European colonial rule. Since they know that they will never be able to persuade their people to adopt secularism by democratic means, they try to foist their alien ideologies on their unwilling subjects through high-handed despotism. Appreciative voices are encouraging them from the Western horizon that "the East is not yet ready for democracy." But these dictators have not the slightest appreciation for democratic ideals. These are the victims of the worst type of slavery. The West applauds them loudly only because of their blind faith in Western materialism and because their belief in Islam has been utterly undermined.

As for the editorial you enclosed in your last letter from *The Islamic Review,* on the Family Laws Ordinance, you may be interested to know that as soon as the decree took effect last March 7th, I along with other *ulema* representing all recognized schools of thought, issued a joint statement criticizing in detail each and every section of the Ordinance and showing its repugnancy to the Quran and Sunnah. Instructions from the Government were given to the press not to publish it. Despite the prohibition, some

persons dared to publish it anyhow. They were interrogated and harassed in various ways and some even imprisoned under the Public Safety Act. Meanwhile, eulogies on these "reforms" are being widely publicized at home and abroad. You have also asked me to comment on the editorial. Now I would only say that this fear of criticism on the part of the upholders of the Ordinance is sufficient comment in itself.

In conclusion, I must apologize again for my inordinate delay in replying through not without reasons.

With Salaams and best wishes,

Yours in Islam,

ABUL ALA

**

New York. January 25, 1962

(Shaban 19, 1381)

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Thank you so much for your highly informative letter of December 16th in which you took such pains to answer all my questions in the most satisfactory manner.

Several weeks ago Zafrullah Khan came to give a special lecture at our mosque here in New York. Originally I had planned to attend but at the last minute, just couldn't bring myself to go. As you must know only too well, Zafrullah Khan is one of the most prominent leaders of the *Ahmadiyya.* Of the two branches, I think the Lahoris are more dangerous than the main group at Rabwah. The Qadianis are frank and out-spoken in their acceptance of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad as Prophet condemning all those Muslims who reject his claim as *Kaffirs,* and thus are clearly outside the pale of Islam. The Lahori Ahmadiyyas, on the other hand, try to pose as perfectly good orthodox Muslims while at the same time propagating their heretical views in an underhanded way. Zafrullah Khan, I believe, belongs to the latter group. Although he likes to pose as an orthodox Muslim, he showed his true collars when he refused as a high Government official to participate in the funeral prayer at the death

of Qaid-e-Azam just because the *Imam* was not a Qadiani!

At a small shop in New York, which specializes in Oriental books and where Islamic books printed in Pakistan are available, I found an excellent little book on the Qadiani movement published by Shaikh Muhammad Ashraf in Lahore entitled, *His Holiness: a Fearless and Frank Exposition of the Hollowness of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's Claim to Prophethood* by "Phoenix" with a very good introduction by Zafar Ali Khan. This book provides the most illuminating study of the Mirza I have ever read in English, which includes copious quotations from his writings. After reading about his life, I wonder how it was possible for such otherwise intelligent scholars like Muhammad Ali Lahori to accept his fantastic claims unless they chose to follow him for some personal or material gain. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad struck me as a man completely lacking in any moral sensitivity and of very mediocre intellectual stature. There is no doubt in my mind that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was insane. "His visions (or more accurately, his hallucinations) assure him that God in heaven glorifies him and invests him with the

highest of decorations. He is king of the Aryans. Jai Singh Bahadur (a Sikh name meaning victorious lion) and Lord Krishna. Mary is one of his names in which character he, or rather she, remains big with Jesus for a period of not more than ten months. The Jesus born is none else than the Mirza himself!" (Pp. 191-192) Isn't that proof he was a madman? I don't know why his relatives failed to recognize that and commit him to the asylum. If Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had been locked up in the mental hospital, he would have had no opportunity to spread his mischief. Then you would not have been imprisoned during the Punjab disturbances in 1953 nor would the death sentence ever have been meted out to you. If Mirza Ghulam Ahmad were alive today, his delusions of grandeur and persecution would be quickly diagnosed by the medical world as schizophrenia-paranoid type. Every line of his writings indicates his malady. As "Phoenix" writes: "Ghulam Ahmad, the prophet, was afflicted with persecution mania in an aggravated form. His claims keep pace with his sense of persecution. The more he feels persecuted the higher and higher his claims go on soaring. *The insane persevere in their delusions the more they are crossed.* Had the

Muslim community let him alone and dismissed his claim as lunacy, his malady, if it were really one, would not have assumed the proportions it did." (Pp. 185-186) In the end, he sees in a vision that he has in fact become God Almighty and denounced those who refused to attest to the truth of his mission as "bastards". Of all the voluminous volumes of books Mirza Ghulam Ahmad wrote, I haven't heard of any translated into English except a small work entitled *The Teachings of Islam.* They must be perfectly, aware how people would ridicule such absurdities and gibberish that masquerade as "revelations." But I think that his books, particularly his *Haqiqat ul Wahy* (The Truth About Revelation), certainly must be reprinted in Urdu and translated into English and other European languages, not for the general public but for the medical world. *Haqiqat ul Wahy* world be of great interest to students of abnormal psychology. Psychiatrists should regard it as a valuable document on schizophrenia which provides the professionally trained with first-hand knowledge how the paranoid mind works. Viewed in this light, an objective study of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad's books could help scientific research in mental diseases.

In one of the books you sent me some time back, you explained how the nationalists of Asia and Africa are perpetuating the same system as their former imperialist masters. The only difference is that the hands are changed. With the anti-Muslim riots at Aligarh and other cities in India where many innocent Muslims have been killed, this fact was immediately brought home. As an atheist and a firm believer in Socialism, Nehru follows the same materialistic creed as his former masters. He does not hesitate to use exactly the same kind of oppression as the British on his own people. If he is not himself guilty of instigating the massacres of the Muslims in India, he has done nothing to try to stop them or punish those responsible. The guiding principle of Western-style nationalism is hatred of minority groups. Nationalism decrees that all citizens must be of the same race speak the same language and are subjected to the same laws; it cannot tolerate differences, Conformity must be imposed at any cost. This principle has run rampant all over the world; we have witnessed it in the Soviet Union in her treatment of non-Russians, we have seen what happened to the Jews under Nazism and the plight of the Arabs in "Israel". Now the same tragedy is

being repeated in India. I wonder if Nehru is taking his lesson from Nazism and Zionism in dispossessing the Indian Muslims of their property, driving them out of the country and now killing them in large numbers. How this contrasts with the tolerance of the *Millet* system in the Islamic state where protected religious minorities are allowed to develop their own cultural life and live according to their own laws unmolested.

Your explanation why Islam prohibits pictures was extremely enlightening and logical. I have always believed that there is an intimate relationship between great art and religious faith. To me, the great mosques like that of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, the mosque of Cordoba, those in Istanbul and their many counterparts throughout the Muslim world, the exquisite calligraphy which adorns the finest copies of the Quran, the rugs, textiles, pottery and glassware are tangible expressions of the spiritual values of Islam. Did not the Holy Prophet himself declare that God is beauty and delights in the beautiful? When Islamic civilization was at its peak, art was not something to be hoarded in museums but an integral part of even the most humble Muslim's life. Art seems to have no place in

the daily life of Western man. Western clothing and ultra-modern architecture is the ugliest things I have ever seen. The so-called "non- objective" or "abstract" painting so fashionable now a days, bears a striking resemblance to the pictures created by schizophrenics in the mental hospitals. What these paintings say is: "Life has no meaning and no pur. There is no God. All is chaps and nothingness." I have no doubt that the decadence of modern art is intimately related to the so-called "philosophy of change." If *everything* must continually be in a state of flux, then it logically follows that there is no stability in anything; all must be limited to a particular time and place and there is nothing of permanent value. All great art must be based on implicit faith in enduring moral and aesthetic truths. I think that the corruption in modern art, as in all other fields of culture, stems directly from the rejection of transcendental ideals. Without the concept of absolute truth, it is not possible for a man to achieve virtue. How can anybody attain dignity and nobility of character if he expects what is cherished today to be obsolete tomorrow?"

The little I have read about Shah Wali Ullah puzzles me very much. On the one hand I read that many Muslim scholars in the Indo-Pak sub-continent consider him second in greatness only to al-Ghazzali. On the other hand, it is said that his masterpiece, *Hujjatullah al Baligha* provided the inspiration for the westernizing modernist movement by urging the supremacy of rationalism, encouraging the translation of the Holy Quran into foreign languages (he himself translated the Quran into Persian), and rejecting all the so-called "Arab" elements of Islam as relevant only for the particular time and place and primitive society of Muhammad's day, it is also claimed that Shah Wali Ullah rejected the authority of the four Orthodox schools and wanted to formulate a new legal system in conformity to the needs of the Muslims in India. He is said to have declared only the purely religious, spiritual portions of the Quran and Sunnah were binding and the rest covering various aspects of worldly life, relevant only for seventh-century Arabia. Now this is what I fail to understand: Shah Wali Ullah lived *before* the impact of British colonialism. According to the little I have read about him, his philosophy provided the justification and foundation for the so-called

Muslim apologetics, which came after him. Did he formulate his ideas independently or if not, what were the outside influences upon him? In his book *The Religious Thought of Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan* recently published by the Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore, Bashir Ahmad Dar says that Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan constantly quoted Shah Wali Ullah to sanction his views.

Sir Sayyid Ahmad's Khan's apologetics mutilated the teachings Of Islam beyond recognition, and exerted the decisive influence upon Sayyid Ameer Ali as well as Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. Even Allama lqbal could not entirely escape his influence, which is particularly evident in his *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.*

I know that Allama lqbal was the greatest Muslim poet of the 20th century some of whose works, even in English translation, are most inspiring but where exactly did he stand? Some scholars insist that he was a modernist *par excellence* and in support of this view, they can quote copiously from *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* which tries to interpret Islamic doctrine according to the criteria of various

contemporary European philosophers and enthusiastically praised the Chemist experiment in Turkey. Yet in his Persian and Urdu poetry, he criticized Western culture and its founders most severely and castigated those Muslims who abandoned their heritage to copy the Westerners. No skeptic or cynic, who a modernist must be, could write on Islamic themes, as Iqbal did, with such pure and noble feelings. What I cannot understand about Allama Iqbal is, why he contradicts himself in so many places? I can't believe that he was really hypocritical; his voice rings much too sincere for that. Then what is the explanation?

Could you also tell me something about Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958) as there is only one book I know of in English dealing with him by Professor Humayun Kabir which I found in the New York Public Library but it is not adequate. All I know about him was that he was a freedom fighter closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi, President of the Congress Party for almost two decades and then after India's independence, held the post of Education Minister until his death. I also read that he was a learned *Alim,* a master of Urdu prose

and wrote a highly controversial commentary on the Holy Quran. Unfortunately, none of his writings are yet available in English translation.

I would be most grateful for any light you can throw on the subjects raised in this letter.

Yours in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

Lahore, February 10, 1962

Dear Maryam Jameelah,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

Thank you for your letter of January 25th.

The views about Mirza Ghulam Ahmad expressed by you are absolutely correct. Even for the sake of argument if we suppose that a prophet could appear after Muhammad (peace be upon him)- although this supposition would be quite contrary to Quran and Hadith-yet when we pause to think how a man of such low moral and mental stature has been crowned as a prophet, we can easily understand the depth of degradation to which the concept of Prophethood has fallen in our times. Most of the books written by this imposter not only remain untranslated into English but their reprint in their Urdu original also is not ventured by his followers. The circulation of his writings is carefully guarded and withheld from the general public because the Qadianis have come to know their absurdity and repulsiveness. You have drawn a true picture of Lahore Ahmadiyya and the Qadianis at Rabwah but your impression that

Sir Zafrullah Khan belongs to the Lahori group is mistaken. He is a confirmed Qadiani and believes the Mirza to be a prophet.

Your analysis of the Indian Government's attitude towards Muslims is quite true. Generally speaking, modern political leaders in Asia and Africa are freedom loving only in the sense that they do not wish to see the reins of political power in foreign hands. But in every other aspect of thought and behavior, they are faithful slaves of their former masters and they invariably follow in their footsteps. Few of them possess free and brave minds. Nehru has a complete soul of an Englishman within him. He is an Indian in his outward physical appearance only.

As for Shah Wali Ullah, he was a great and true scholar of Islam first and last. I cannot guarantee that I endorse his each and every word but there is no doubt that he was a first-rank *muhaddith* (Traditionalist) and *Fuqeeh* (Jurist). In the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent he was the pioneer in propagating knowledge of Hadith and every group of our ulema is indebted to him for dissemination of the Holy Prophet's teachings. Due to his authoritative and respectable posit- ion every "reformist"

here tries to exploit his name, tears his words out of context and distorts them to serve his own ends. All his books are either in Arabic or Persian and any person conversant with his ideas know fully well how dishonest these support-seekers are! They are putting strange and fantastic constructions upon his words and are trying to dig out such ideas as are nowhere found in his writings. Shah Wali Ullah never advocated the "supremacy of rationalism" and he never wanted to eliminate the "Arab elements" from Islam. He was a great admirer of all four orthodox schools of *Fiqh* and did not aspire to evolve a "new legal system" to the exclusion of the former ones. However, seeing the rigidity and antagonism between the time-honored schools, he had expressed a wish that it would be better to evolve by a synthetically process a new legal system out of Hanafi and Shafi *Fiqh* especially. But he never went beyond that.

I do not deny the fact that Allama Iqbal aptly criticized the West. and did a great service to the cause of Islam especially through his poetry. But unfortunately, as you already pointed out, his writings are not free from contra. Firstly, Iqbal had been constantly

passing through different stages of mental evolution during his life span and only in the last years of his life had been able to form in his mind a clear and unalloyed conception of Islam. In his earlier life, many extraneous ideas and influences were freely intermingled with his Islamic notions. Secondly, during a major portion of his life, instead or being a Muslim adhering to strictly cosmopolitan views, there was always a tinge of "Muslim nationalism" from which he could not escape. That is why he felt hesitant in condemning Muslim leaders and modernist thinkers. Sometimes, due to poetic license, he went to the extremes of rationalizing and supporting even their un-Islamic activities. Thirdly, you should beat in mind that many historical and political factors were at work to sustain deep-rooted sympathies for Turkey among the Indo-Pakistan Muslims. These Muslims, after being enslaved by British imperialism, had a sentimental attachment to this last vestige of their vanished glory and defended it in every possible way. As a reward for what Kemal Ataturk had done to save this tottering Muslim State, Muslim scholars and thinkers here were prepared to condone Kemal's anti-Islamic and manifestly blasphemous deeds. With this mental and emotional background,

Iqbal also until 1930 went on offering apologies and explanations for Kemal Ataturk's "reforms" and trying to find for them a place within the Islamic order. But at last even our poet's patience seemed to be over-taxed and he began to condemn Kemalist innovations openly.

Until 1921, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad was an enthusiastic exponent of Islamic revival and Khilafat movement. But afterwards he turned a complete somersault in thought and action, so much so that people began to rub their eyes to make sure whether he was the same Azad or by some process of metamorphic a new person had been born within him. Abdul Kalam Azad was now a hundred per cent Indian nationalist and a vociferous protagonist of a single Indian nationhood of Muslims and non-Muslims. He assimilated the so- called "unity of religions" concept expounded by some Hindu philosophers and the Western theory of Darwinian evolution. The imprint of these theories can clearly be seen in his *Tafseer on* Quran.

Islam engenders within us a spiritual refinement and an aesthetic taste, which

enables us to shun ugliness and to do everything beautifully. Atheism and materialism, on the other hand, pervert human tastes and make men adore and glorify ugliness. That is why under the spell of present materialistic civilization, in every branch of art and literature, degeneration has set in.

Now I take leave with *Salaams* and best wishes.

Yours in Islam,

ABUL ALA

New York, March 22, 1962

(Shawwal 16,1391)

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

Ever since your passport was invalidated last summer to Africa and the Arab countries and especially since your publisher, Mian Tufail Muhammad was arrested and imprisoned, I have been feeling extremely anxious regarding your safety. If your reply is delayed a month or more, I start worrying about whether you have fallen ill or if, God forbid, you must share the same fate as your publisher. I am as much concerned about your welfare as if you were a close relative of mine in grave danger even though we have never met face to face. I only pray to Allah to spare you from all harms.

No doubt you have been wondering all these months why I have hesitated to promptly accept your generous offer to provide me

with all possible support and assistance once I agreed to come to Lahore. The truth of the matter is that I could not muster the courage to cut irrevocably all the ties from my family and my past and confidently step out into the unknown. That is why every time you raised the question, I simply evaded it, hoping that somehow the situation here would take a turn for the better. Now I know that I had hoped in vain.

Briefly summarized, my problem is this. I am a hopeless misfit. I just cannot live in this society. Since I have no employment record worth mentioning, no commercial abilities or interests, no specialized training or professional skills and no college, diploma - all of this on top of the stigma of having spent more than two years from March 1957 to April 1959 in mental hospitals. I have no hope of finding any productive, useful or honest livelihood congenial to my temperament.

Whenever I go looking for work, the employment agencies give me a uniformly cold reception. The principal function of these employment agencies is to screen out so-called "undesirables" that is, people who

have no "market-value," and from their viewpoint, I am absolutely worthless. My father who is a salesman and any mother who is a highly respected social-worker, both intend to retire next year after which they will feel compelled on their reduced income, to cut off my financial support. Even worse, they want to move away from the four-room flat where we have been living ever since September 1939, sell their furniture and household effects and travel from place to place for their own pleasure until illness or death strikes them down. Since my parents know fully well why we cannot live together in peace and harmony, they will not allow me to accompany them. Even if they did, I would feel intensely unhappy and frustrated living their kind of life, which never transcends mundane pleasure and appears to me so superficial, empty and meaningless. Thus now more than ever since my discharge from the hospital three years ago, the constant threat is hanging over my head that unless I find remunerative work before my parents retire and break up housekeeping, I will be compelled to subsist on the dole from the City Welfare Department or face the dismal prospect of life-long commitment. Rehabilitation is impossible. I will never have

any place in this society. Without the support of my parents, I could not live here for a single day as a free citizen. I would far rather he dead than a living death in such humiliation and misery. I frankly confess that if it were not for my faith, in Islam, I would have committed suicide years ago.

After declining your kind invitation for so long, would it be too late to accept it now?

Your- sister-in-faith,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

**

Lahore, March 31, 1962

Dear Maryam Jameelah,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah

Thank you for your letter of March 22nd, which expressed your sincere and deep anxiety about my health and safety. This is but a natural consequence of that kinship which is inherent among all true Muslims. By the grace of Allah, I am quite safe and sound. I am convinced that a man, who trusts in Allah and honestly works for Him, enjoys the blessings of His guidance and protection. During these last thirty years, I have never for a moment bothered about my personal safety or thought it necessary to take any special precautions. Whatever I thought was the truth, I uttered it unambiguously and pursued it without hesitation to the end. Those who did not like that, left no stone unturned to remove me from their way, but all their conspiracies failed and in fact proved beneficial for my task. I hope kind Providence has a similar fate in store for me and my adversaries in the future.

I have long fully appreciated all your difficulties and problems. I was never very hopeful about your future in America. That is why in my very first letter to you, I advised you to leave America and migrate to some Muslim country, preferably Pakistan. I had thought that if you came at once to Pakistan, I would be glad to shelter you as a member of my family in my home. In due course, you would have had the opportunity through my introduction to meet virtuous young Muslims. If any of them was found to be a suitable match for you, bomight be united in wedlock and prove to be good workers for the Islamic movement here. But when it appeared that you thought it feasible to remain in America, I dropped the idea.

But now again when I ponder over your problems, I am driven renew my offer to you. On account of foreign exchange restrictions, it is not possible for me to give you any monetary help while you are in America. So I think you had better leave immediately before your financial position worsens. Once you are here, *inshallah* you will have no cause to worry about your future.

I want you to make the whole position clear to Your Parents. You should tell them frankly how difficult it would be for you to continue living in America after their retirement and why your welfare demands that they should willingly allow you to settle in Pakistan. You should also tell them that the man who is advising you and inviting you to take this crucial step is perhaps next to them your most sincere well wishes. He will not be content to extend mere advice but he would be prepared to shoulder all the subsequent responsibilities after this advice is accepted. If you and your parents trust him, God willing, their trust will not be betrayed.

Your brother-in-faith,

ABUL ALA

New York, April 7, 1962

(Dhul-Qadah 2, 13SI)

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah wa barakatuh.

I just received your registered letter of March 31st, and I accept your invitation and will follow all your advice with feelings of deepest gratitude.

One young man I had a talk with at the mosque told me of his conversation with Maulana Fazlur Rahman Ansari Al Qaderi, head of the World Federation of Islamic Missions in Karachi while visiting New York who allegedly said that "the convert must be a mental case 1" My first reaction was that this was the most outrageous statement I had ever heard and I told him so. I have made mistakes in my life and admit I have done some foolish things but my acceptance of Islam was the most positive, most

constructive and sanest of all my actions. I am also convinced beyond doubt that Islam is the most potent medicine for mental health. However, the Maulana may well be correct in the sense that because the transition from Judaism or Christianity to Islam means nothing less than the transition from Western to Islamic civilization and a wholehearted adoption of an entirely different way of life, perfectly happy, prosperous, well-adjusted individuals like my parents, sister, aunts, uncles and cousins, would lack any motivation, much less willingness to make personal sacrifice to reject their formerly cherished beliefs and activities in exchange for something so alien to all they had previously known or experienced. Only a person extremely unhappy or at least dissatisfied with his existing mode of life would be willing undergo such a radical change. Thus if I had not experienced such emotional turmoil and acute maladjustment, I would never had made such strenuous efforts to find a more satisfactory philosophy of life. Had I been so favorably endowed by nature as the other members of my family, I would have had no cause or reason to doubt the goodness and soundness of our society and I would hive passed my life exactly like

my parents and my sister. So, you can see that Allah wants what is ultimately best for His servants and what seemed like such a curse could be a blessing.

It will be stimulating to live in Lahore because within the last decade or two since the banning of *al Ikhwan al Muslimun* and the secularization and nationalization of al-Azhar University, Lahore has replaced Cairo as the center of Islamic activity. I will also like Lahore because Islamic literature is so easily available there. It seems to me that more Islamic books are published in Lahore than anywhere else. If I fail through negligence or laziness to acquire mastery in Islamic learning, I will have only myself to blame.

Please write directly to my parents and explain everything. One of the reasons they might object to our plans is because like all other Westerners, they think that Muslims have nothing but contempt for women and keep them in abject subjection like chattel and that in Pakistan women are ill-treated and denied their rights as individuals.

Again may I convey to you my deepest gratitude. It is only because of the mercy and

compassion of Allah that I am not left to struggle isolated and alone. May Allah bless you.

Your sister in Islam,

MARYAM JAMEELAH

Lahore, April 18,1962

Dear Maryam Jameelah,

Assalaam alaikum wa rahmatullah.

I received your letter dated April 7th yesterday and am glad to know that you have accepted my counsel and are prepared to come to Pakistan. I pray to Allah that He may guide you to what is right and in your best interest.

I would advise you to travel by sea because the fare is cheaper than by air and you can take with you much more luggage. You will embark at the port at Karachi and from there you will go to Lahore by train. N4any fast trains run between these two cities and the journey usually last about 22 hours. After you have made all your final arrangements at the Pakistan Consulate in New York, you should promptly inform Chaudhri Ghulam Muhammad of 23 Strachen Road, Karachi-1, about the date of your ship's departure, the name of your ship and its company and the most probable date of your arrival in Karachi. I am writing him a letter requesting him to

receive you at Karachi, make the necessary arrangements for your trip from Karachi to Lahore and at once send me a telegram on your arrival. At the Lahore depot, either I myself will personally receive you or my secretary, Malik Ghulam Ali will be present to escort you to my house. It would be preferable for you to come not later than the third week of June. I intend to go to Africa in mid-July. If you come at least two or three weeks before my departure abroad, I hope you and my family would be adjusted to each other and when you begin to feel at home, I would be able to proceed on my tour free from all anxiety.

I think it is advisable to mention a few things, which would help you in your psychological and physical adaptation to your new environment. As you must already know, our way of life and social conditions a vastly different from those in America. Here we lack so many facilities and amenities, which Americans take for, granted as a matter of course. The language barrier will also be troublesome to some extent. Due to these reasons, the first months here will certainly prove fatiguing and taxing upon your nerves. Unless you have patience and are resolutely

determined to mould your life according to our pattern and live and die among your Muslim brethren here, you might find it extremely difficult to reconcile your- self to the unavoidable difficulties in the initial stage. Although I will try my best to look after your needs and make things easier, your steadfast cooperation is essential.

Two of my daughters are near to you in age. My twenty-three year old Humaira is studying for her Masters degree in English literature and my nineteen-year-old Asma is working for her Bachelor of Arts in Economics. I hope they will make friends with you, teach you Urdu and in exchange, learn from you the enthusiasm of a new convert. Since my wife knows little English, the language barrier may at first hinder your intimacy with her but I hope you will learn enough Urdu within two or three months to be able to understand and carry an ordinary conversation. After you have learned Urdu, it will be relatively easy for you to learn Arabic, because both these languages share more vocabularies in common. In due course, I will also try to arrange for teaching you Arabic.

Regarding your marriage, I will leave the matter entirely to your discretion. is no question of any sort of pressure on my part. But if you ever think of leading a married life I will try to help you in your choice of a suitable life partner. In any case, I am prepared to welcome you forever as a member of my family. I am inviting you to share my hospitality in the spirit with which the early Muslim inhabitants of Medina extended their invitation to their harassed and persecuted brethren in Mecca, and I wish you to respond with a similar spirit of *Hijrah* (migration), convinced that the bonds of faith are firmer and stronger than relationship of flesh and blood.

There is still another reason why you should postpone any decision about marriage for the present. When you begin to live in my house, my wife will try to give you practical training how a Pakistani Muslim wife runs her home and manages her household affairs. If at all you think of leading a married life, this knowledge will be indispensable. You would not be happy tied to a westernized man but naturally want to be married to a youth who lives as a good Pakistani Muslim. For such a marital relationship to achieve success, it is

essential to learn the etiquette of Muslim families here.

You should also take note of the fact that when you reach Lahore this part of our country will be in the severest grip of hot weather. In June, July and August the summer heat reaches its maximum point and the day-time temperatures average well over 100 degrees F. Our houses are not air-conditioned but we do use electric fans. Eventually you will become accustomed to our tropical seasons but you must be prepared to bear the first onslaught on this extreme climate.

I am happy that the Pakistan Consulate General in New York has offered to help arrange transit facilities. You should ascertain from him the period of stay for which a visa can be issued and the procedure of obtaining domicile certificate in due course. I would advise you not to change your nationality now. It would be much wiser for you to stay here for a reasonable period on your American passport.

You should bring with you all necessary belongings, which you can easily manage.

Due to heavy customs duties, foreign products are so expensive as you cannot imagine in America. Therefore leave nothing behind which you may need, assuming that it could easily be replaced in Pakistan.

I am writing a separate letter to your parents. I advise you to introduce me to them yourself and show them some of my letters to you so they may be able to grasp fully the background of my present letter to them.

Your brother in Islam,

ABUL ALA

Lahore, April 18, 1962

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Marcus,

I am taking the liberty of writing this letter to you from Pakistan. The medium of introduction between you and me is your dear Daughter, Miss Margaret Marcus who has been corresponding with me for almost a year and a half. Briefly, I will explain the reasons for my present letter to you.

I think you know already that your daughter has been studying Islam for many years and that even prior to her formal conversion, she had begun to write articles and essays in defense of Islam. Later, after careful consideration and due deliberation, she solemnly resolved to enter into the fold of Islam and accept this faith as her way of life. As I am also a humble follower of Islam and have worked all my adult life to promote its cause, our mutual interests invariably brought us into contact with each other and we became intimately acquainted with one another.

What she has told me about her present difficulties in her letters has made me realize

that there seems to be no future for her in America. Rather, I think that if she remains in America under existing circumstances, her entire life may be ruined. Therefore I have sincerely advised her that she should make her home in some Muslim country and if she chooses to come to Pakistan, she is welcome to my home and hearth, not as a temporary guest but as a permanent member of my family. I have great admiration for her character and ideals and I have come to regard her as dear and near to me as any of my blood relations. In this spirit, I have invited her to come and live with me and my family. She is prepared to accept my invitation but she would hesitate to go unless her kind parents give their consent to you.

That is the purpose of my this letter

Had you known anything about me beforehand, I would have nothing more to add. But being an utter stranger to you, I cannot but assure you that you can fully repose your confidence in me on this matter. Naturally your first reaction will not favor her migration from America to an Eastern country but if you would consider the matter more deeply, keeping in view the ultimate welfare

of your daughter, I hope you will agree with me that this is the only solution to the predicament in which she finds herself.

Pakistan is preferable to other Muslim countries because English is widely spoken and understood and converts are highly respected. As for myself, you can ask anything you want to know about me from Miss Margaret Marcus. I am sure that my wife and children will prove an equal, if not better substitute for her American family. God willing, you should have no cause to worry about her future.

With best regards.

Sincerely yours,

ABUL ALA

Mr. Herbert Marcus to Maulana Maududi

New York, May 2, 1962

Dear Maulana Maudoodi,

Thank you for your kind letter of April 18th, extending to my daughter, Margaret, an invitation to live in your home. My wife and I are deeply moved by your gracious offer of hospitality.

Since embracing Islam a year ago, particularly as an ardent convert, it seems that living in our society presents practical difficulties. Margaret is eager to accept your invitation and as her parents, we are ready to give her our consent although it means going to live in a distant land. Especially in view of the zeal she has shown, we are hopeful this would give her the opportunity for a happy and meaningful life.

Coming to a country with such a different culture will surely require much forbearance during a period of adjustment. With the sympathy and understanding indicated in your letters combined with Margaret's ardor, I

am confident that her entrance into your family life will be successful.

I was pleased to note in your letter to Margaret the advice regarding change of citizenship and marriage. It is my paternal wish that she took irrevocable steps only after a reasonable period of residence.

She goes to your country with our blessings and we shall maintain our continuing interest in her welfare. Therefore please feel at liberty to write to me about her at any time.

Mrs. Marcus joins me in conveying to you, your wife and children our heartfelt gratitude.

Very sincerely,

HERBERT S. MARCUS

Maryam Jameelah's Letter to her parents Inviting them to Islam

In the Name of Allah, most Compassionate, most Merciful

An Open Letter to Her Parents

By Maryam Jameelah. Courtesy of *The Universal Message* and Iqra Islamic Publications




Dear Mother and Father,

I have now been living in Pakistan for more than twenty years during which time you have acquired an entire additional family of loved-ones there, adding much to your happiness. You have reached a ripe age, thank God, living longer in good health than I had ever expected. You have read all my books and Islamic literature I have sent you with a broad and open mind. Therefore you need no introduction to the subject I wish to discuss with you now and nothing I have to say will seem strange and new to you.

I wonder if you realize fully how very fortunate you are. So long as you can keep in reasonable health and are able to take care of yourselves, you can continue to enjoy a

pleasant life. But do you ever think of the tragic faith of those hundreds of thousands of other older Americans, the victims of chronic illness and infirmities, who crowd to over-flowing hospitals and nursing homes (which are really charnel houses), the old-age homes and the senile wards of mental institutions? And do you ever think of those still greater numbers of older people who are widowed and live their lonely lives confined to their dingy rooms in constant fear of muggings, physical attacks and robberies by juvenile delinquents who prey on the old and infirm with no remorse or fear of punishment? The maltreatment of older people is a direct result of the collapse of the home and extended family. Does your elder sister - my aunt Rosalyn, a great-grandmother lovingly sheltered in a close and adoring family and a happy home, ever think how lucky she is and how few of her advanced age in America are left like her?

You must know that society in which you were brought up and have lived all your life is in a state of rapid disintegration on the brink of collapse. Actually the decline in our civilization was evident as far back as World War I but at that time few people except some intellectuals and artists were aware of what was happening. But since the end of World War II and especially during the last two decades, the rot has reached such a stage of advanced decay that nobody can any longer ignore it.

The moral anarchy in the absence of any respected, fixed standards of behavior and conduct, the obsession with perverted sex over the entertainment media, the mistreatment of older people, the divorce rate which has climbed so high that among the new generation, an

enduring, happy marriage is becoming rare, child abuse, the destruction of the natural environment, the prodigious waste of scarce and valuable resources, the epidemic of veneral diseases and mental disorders, drug addiction, alcoholism, suicides as leading cause of death, crime, vandalism, corruption in the government and contempt for the law in general - all of this has a cause.

The cause of this is the failure of secularism and materialism and the absence of absolute, transcendental theological and moral values. Deed does in the final analysis depend upon creed because if the intention is wrong, the work always suffers.

No doubt that it may bore you to read this. You will protest that if you are not theologians, philosophers or sociologists, then why bother about such "deep" matters when they do not seem to be of any direct concern to you? After all, you are happy and content living just as you are. You only wish to enjoy life right now, live entirely in the present and accept each day as it comes. If life is a journey, is it not foolhardy only to be concerned with pleasant and comfortable accommodations along the way and never to think about the journey's end? Why were we born? What is the meaning and purpose of life, why must we die and what will happen to each of us after death?

Father you have told me more than once that you cannot accept any traditional religion because you are convinced that theology conflicts with modern science. Science and technology have indeed given us much information about the physical world, provided us with abundant comforts and conveniences, increased efficiency and discovered remedies for many diseases that used to be fatal. But

science does not and cannot tell us about the meaning of life and death. Science tells us "how" but it never answers the question "why"?. Can science ever tell us what is right and what is wrong? What is good and what is evil? What is beautiful and what is ugly? And to whom are we accountable for what we do? Religion does.

Today America is in many ways a repetition of ancient Rome in the terminal stages of her decline and fall. Thinking people know that secularism has failed to be a sound foundation of our social order. They are anxiously searching in other directions for a solution to the crisis but do not know yet where to find it. This is not of concern only to a few sociologists. The disease of national disintegration directly affects you and me and each one of us.

During its most critical period, ancient Rome adopted Christianity as its salvation and henceforth the Church dominated Europe for more than a thousand years. This put an end to many of the worst social and moral evils of decadent Rome and greatly raised the moral and spiritual standards of the people. Unfortunately during the formative period of its history, the Church compromised with paganism and secularism, adopting an elaborate priesthood and incomprehensive theology which could not resist the impact of the renaissance, the revival of the natural sciences and the radical secularism of the French Revolution. While Christians in Europe and America have deserted their faith wholesale leaving the churches almost empty, the missionaries continue to represent the vanguard of western imperialism and exploitation in Asia and Africa.

After Christianity, the Jews comprise the second largest religious group in America who dominate politically, and economically, as well exercising considerable control over the media. But Judaism has always been parochial and tribal, seldom welcoming converts. It is not and has never been a universal faith. The Zionist movement which resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel, is the secular expression of Jewish nationalism and tribalism. The dreadful atrocities committed by the Israelis in occupied Palestine, the unprovoked aggression in Lebanon and adjacent areas and attempted genocide of the Palestine Arabs, depriving them of all human and political rights, is the logical result of this same narrow parochial outlook. This is the reason why even the most orthodox of the rabbis refuse to believe that Israel can do any wrong and uncritically support everything she does. These glaring moral and spiritual defects automatically disqualify Judaism as the faith of the future.

The Muslims comprise the third and fastest growing faith in America today. No longer is Islam confined to remote regions of the deserts and jungles of Asia and Africa. No longer is Islam foreign to the American scene. There are more than three million Muslims in America today and their numbers are increasing fast. There are thousands of students from all Muslim countries studying in American universities, and well-educated, highly-trained Muslims are busily at work in all professions. In the last two decades, hundreds of native-born American converts have swelled their ranks. At first most of the converts were black people who found in Islam, dignity, honor, self-respect and racial brotherhood as did Malcolm-X, but in recent years more and more white converts of European origin, searching for guidance in all the affairs of their

formally chaotic lives, have also embraced Islam, making many sacrifices and enduring much hardships to do so. Few of them are fortunate as I am to have loving parent like you. Most of them suffer severe frictions with their non-Muslim parents and relatives. Today churches and synagogues are almost deserted but the newly-built mosques and Islamic centers, springing up in every important American city and town, are attracting rapidly growing numbers. Most of the new Muslims in America are young, intelligent and well-educated. What attracts so many young Americans to Islam?

Americans today, both young and old, are desperately searching for guidance. They know from bitter experience that the personal freedom and opportunities they as Americans enjoy are meaningless and self-destructive without reliable guidance, direction and purpose. Secularism and materialism are powerless to provide any positive or constructive moral values for Americans either individually or collectively. That is why after Christianity and Judaism have failed them, more and more people in America today are turning towards Islam. In Islam as new Muslims, they find a sane, healthy, clean and honest life. And for Muslims, everything does not come to an end at death. They look forward to an Eternity of bliss, peace and perfect happiness (in the Hereafter).

This Guidance found in the Holy Qur'an and the recorded words and deeds of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is not only for foreign races in some far-away corner of the East, centuries ago. Here are to be found the solutions to all economic, social, moral and political problems which face us right here in the West today. Furthermore, Islam is not cold, remote and

impersonal. Muslims have complete faith in a very personal God who not only created, sustains and rules the universe but also loves and deeply cares about the fate of each of us. The Holy Qur'an tells us that God is nearer to everyone of us than our jugular veins!

Since the Holy Qur'an is divine revelation, it cannot and will never be changed. Because it is perfect, it cannot be improved [upon], revised or reformed. Since Muhammad, upon whom be peace, is the final Prophet, his guidance can never be superseded by any other. The Qur'an and Sunnah are addressed to all peoples, in every country of the West as well as the East. Since it is relevant for all times, in all places, it can never become obsolete or out-of-date.

You are both of very advanced age and there is so little time left. Yet it is not too late if you act now. If your decision is positive, your ties with your loved ones in Pakistan will not only be by blood but also in faith. You cannot only love them in this world but be all together with us forever in eternity.

If your decision is negative, I am very much afraid that your happy, comfortable and pleasant life will very shortly come to an end. As soon as the inevitable occurs, it is too late for remorse and regrets. The punishment will be terrible from which there is no refuge and no escape.

It is as your daughter who loves you and hopes to the end that you will be spared this fate. But the decision rests entirely with you. You have complete freedom to accept or reject: Your future depends upon the choice you make now.

All my love and best wishes.

Your devoted daughter

,
Signed

(Maryam Jameelah)

http://www.geocities.com/embracing_islam/mjletter.htm

(The above website, from which this article had been extracted is no more functional; instead it is available at the following website:

http://maryam--jameelah.blogspot.co.nz/2009/01/open-letter-to-her-parents.html

WHAT DO OTHERS SAY ABOUT MARYAM JAMEELAH'S BOOKS?

1. ISLAM VERSUS THE WEST

Maryam Jameelah (formerly Margaret Marcus) is quite a well-known figure in the Muslim world now. This book, comprising various essays by her, some of which were written even before she formally, embraced Islam. Starting with the story of how she got interested in Islam when in New York, the book is by and large a critical survey of the writings of modernist Muslims like Mr. A. A. Fyzee of India and Ziya Gokalp of Turkey. The writings of orientalists like Mr. Wilfred Cantwell Smith have also been critically examined. Maryam Jameelah is a great admirer of *al Ikhwan al Muslimun* of Egypt. The two Muslims of this century highly praised by her are Sayyid Qutb and Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Towards the end of the book shas also treated in a philosophical vein such topics as the prohibition of pictures and the significance of *"Taqbir."* The book ends with a negative answer to the question, "Is

Westernization inevitable?" The book is well bound and deserves wide publicity.

n this collection of essays, she makes a brilliant analysis of the folly and futility of compromising the principles and spiritual values of Islam in a vain attempt to prove their compatibility with the material aspirations and drive or aggrandizement that set apart the spirit of the modern West. She is firmly opposed to the so-called westernizers within the fold of Islam and with eloquent reasoning, she argues that Islamic society can flourish and contribute its own in a technocratic civilization without having to sacrifice the inner principles of its being.

2. ISLAM AND MODERNISM

It goes to the credit of an American-born convert that she made a searching criticism of the philosophical sources of western materialism, modern philosophy, and the fallacy of modernism. Showing the futility of the apologetic approach of Muslim modernists towards Islam, she demands that they should put an end once and for all interpreting Islam through foreign criteria and summon the courage to stand up and defend

an unadulterated Islam. She upholds Islam in its pure form and stresses the necessity for a re-evaluation of Islamic history in that light. Written in a bitter tone but lucid style, the book makes very useful reading.

The Pakistan Observer, Dacca.

The book is extremely readable and thought provoking. Also it contains a number of seminal generalizations, each one of which asks for a book. Like all true Muslims, the author combines practice with preaching. Her photograph at the beginning of the book shows her enveloped from head to foot in Islamic *Purdah.* This eminent lady has proved that *Purdah,* if observed according to Allah's laws, cannot impede women's mental development but in fact is a sign of her dignity and nobility.

The Criterion: Journal of the Islamic Research Academy,

3. ISLAM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

This is the inquiry of a restless soul, courageous and bold, frank and forthright, promising and challenging. The day of

Islamic supremacy, this American-Jewish convert pleads, shall not be far away if only the Muslims realize their destiny, live up to the ideals of Islam, strive to uphold the Word of God in every walk of their lives to establish Islam in its entirety in political, social, economic cultural and all other aspects. Then Islam would be a living force and not just an academic proposition. As in other writings of hers, Maryam Jameelah is at her best when she takes to account Western philosophy, thought, ideals and practices. Her advantage is that she was brought up and nurtured in Western society and educated and trained in the Western tradition, so naturally she is better fitted to know its dark spots and the mainsprings of evil which have polluted Western society and which are now corroding the foundations of Muslim society with its obnoxious influences. The personalities, movements and parties dedicated to the cause of the revival of Islam, particularly in our own age, have been very ably summed up and the penetrating eyes of the author have been able to assess remarkably well the real worth and status of persons and parties of the recent past and present. Few writers on Islam have that balanced outlook, that courage to speak the truth, that integrity

of mission, that maturity of thought and detailed grasp on the subject which this American-born lady displays in her short, terse essays.

The Criterion, Karachi.

4. ISLAM VERSUS AHL AL KITAB PAST AND PRESENT

Really! Amazing! Incredible! What? - are exclamations that come out often as one feels the impact of this great exposure and indictment of Zionism and the Christian church. The author conveys much of her points by the very words of the people she talks about. To avoid quoting out of context, she uses many lengthy extracts. The result is a very fair, balanced and objective presentation. None can deny that this is the greatest assault on Judaism and Christianity both in theory and practice coming from a Muslim pen for a very long time. How has she set about it? Firstly, it must be mentioned that the author's history places her at a position of advantage to perform such a task. She grew up in a Jewish family, a member of the Jewish minority in Christian America and then embraced Islam. Being a near insatiable

bibliophile as well entitles her to a claim of inside knowledge of the three faiths. All these assets are brought into good use here. The lengthy chapter on Judaism is a well-documented outline of Jewish beliefs, culture, complexes, deviations and history. The author provides an analysis of the background to the rise of Zionism and how a racist religion, garbed with modern political and military sophistry and bred on the support of Western treachery and collusion, has grown into the menacing monstrosity of Zionism. The second chapter contains the post energetic refutation of Christianity that I leave ever come across. It is a historical, a moral, an academic and indeed, an outright refutation of Christianity. The author answers the usual Christian accusations against Islam with even greater vehemence. In this, one sees how much she detests the apologetic approach of answering back. Rather she throws the whole table on the Christians. She gives a lucid and highly informative analysis of the aims and moods of operation of the Christian missionary. The last chapter rounds off beautifully her arguments against racist Judaism and neo-imperialist, man-made Christianity. She presents Islam as the only authentic religion through which mankind can

be united. This book is Maryam Jameelah's best work to date.

The Muslim: Journal of the Federation of Student Islamic societies in the United Kingdom and Eire, London.

5. AHMAD KHALIL: THE BIOGRAPHY OF A PALESTINIAN ARAB REFUGEE

This nicely printed book has much to commend itself to readers. Since the story was written by a convert from Zionism who herself witnessed all the ups and downs, her treatment of the whole tale is superb. Besides the elements of suspense and surprise, vivid description and good characterization sustain the reader's interest at high pitch. The plot from beginning to end is so well woven that the reader's interest never sags. The pen-portraits of Ahmad Khalil, his brother, Khalifa and his cousin, Rashid are very well drawn and life- like.

The Pakistan Review, Lahore

Religious exaltation is well known but faith has its depths too when overwhelmed by suffering, pain and defeat, man is sustained

by Allah's love. *Ahmad Khalil* in parts successfully conveys the quiet piety of those who live in true humility before Allah. The book catches the religious dignity or the common Muslim family living next to the soil where women are modest and hardworking and the men brave and industrious. The characterization of the sensitive boy, Khalifa, whose life is haunted by the brutality of the Israelis, shows that the author is capable of presenting psychological realities. Many people in the West believe that the Israelis have a better right than the Arabs to Palestine because they are "progressive" and have made the desert bloom. The poor and the backward deserve the worst that comes to them. *Ahmad Khalil* is a stirring repudiation of this theory of "progress".

The Criterion, Karachi.

OTHER ENGLISH, URDU AND TURKISH PERIODICALS WHICH HAVE REVIEWED THESE BOOKS

1. **Nawa-i-Waqt** (Lahore),**Pakistan Times** (Lahore). **Yeni Istanbu**l
2. **Asia** *(Lahore),* **Ayeen** *(Lahore),* **Young Pakistan** *(Dacca),*

Siddiq, Maulana Abdul Majjid Daryabadi, U.P. *(India),*

3. **Tarjuman-ul-Q**, Maulana Sayyid Abul Ala Maudoodi,

Urdu Digest *(Lahore),* **Sayyara Digest** *(Lahore).*

4. **Islamic Studies**: quarterly of the Institute for Islamic Research *(Rawalpindi).*
5. **The Muslim World**: quarterly of the Hartford Seminary Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut, (*U.S.A*.).

This page was prepared for easy reading-on-line by Muhammad Umar Chand